

# OLD LANCASTER.

This paper makes no pretension to being exhaustive. Most of it is only a "twice-told tale," familiar to many of you. There is too much of interest in the early history of this fair city of ours—too much of importance—for this to be more than a brief sketch of a few prominent items which stand out in bold relief upon our record. They are only touched upon, very imperfectly, by a member of your society, who desires—

"For you, who love this fair, broad land,  
In which our lot is cast—  
To gather, with a reverent hand,  
Some pearls which gem the Past."

So, for a few moments, let us look back. Let me give you a few glimpses of Lancaster in the last century.

"Fair city, nestling 'mid green hills,  
With spires whose sweet bells chime  
In notes that thro' the silence thrills  
Thy tales of olden time;

"No battles scarred thy tranquil streets,  
Nor stained thy soil with gore—  
Yet at each step the loiterer meets  
Some strange historic lore.

"Thy sons in valor bore their part,  
And many a noble name  
Endeared unto the Nation's heart  
Lives on the rolls of Fame!"

Prior to 1708 or 1709, there were no settlements in what is now known as Lancaster county, then forming a part of Chester. A few whites, Indian traders, had their abodes along the Susquehanna. But the earliest settlers were the "Mennonites," who emigrated to America from Switzerland

and the Palatinate, about 1709, the French Huguenots, from Alsace and Lorraine, and the Scotch-Irish, who came in 1715. Part of the land on which Lancaster now stands was taken up as early as 1717. A few people were living there in 1721. These were "squatters." One of them, George Gibson by name, built and kept a tavern or "ordinary," which he called "The Hickory Tree," and which is said to have stood near what is now known as Penn Square.\* Under the great tree standing near the tavern, and from which it derived its name, the Indians are said to have held their councils. By slow degrees a small hamlet grew around the spot, known variously as "Gibson's Pasture," "Indian Town," "Spring Town," and "Hickory Town." It was also known as "Waving Hills," bounded on the west by "Roaring Brook," now the "gas," formerly "Hoffman's Run." There were two swamps, the "Dark Hazel," nearly in the centre of the now city, and the "Long Swamp," in the northeastern part. Wolves and other wild animals prowled in the vicinity, and the red men roved over the hills and valleys of the country.

Of the sixty-seven county towns in the Keystone State, only three can claim a date prior to that of Lancaster. Philadelphia, then sometimes known as "Shackamaxon," with Bucks and Chester, had been founded in 1682. Lancaster dates her birth to 1730, the county having been organized the preceding year, and its name given by John Wright, after the county in England, from which (in 1714) he came. Until August, 1730, the courts were held at Postlethwait's tavern, where, on August 5, 1729, the seven-

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\*Rupp says it was on what is now East King street, where Slaymaker's tavern afterwards stood. In olden times it was the site of an Indian wigwam, and nearby was a fine spring. Gibson's sign of a hickory tree was painted about 1722.

teen original townships of the county were named and their boundaries defined. Until this date, it had been understood that the landed right for the "Townstead" had been vested in the Proprietaries, and was unsurveyed land. But it had passed into the hands of Andrew Hamilton. The plan for the town was made in March, 1730, when "in the island of Pennsylvania, in Conestoken," the city was laid out. There was an open square in its centre, as in other old towns of the State, crossed at right angles by the two principal streets on which loyalty bestowed the names of "King" and "Queen." "Duke," "Prince," "Orange," "Charlotte" and "Ann" followed: love of nature spoke in "Chestnut," "Walnut," "Lime" and "Mulberry," while love of country gave the English Lancaster a namesake in the New World—that same love of country which in later years was to make the new-born city a centre of patriotism and devotion to the cause of Independence.

A lot, 66 feet square, in the heart of the city, at the intersection of King and Queen streets, was purchased from Andrew Hamilton and Ann, his wife, for the consideration of 2s. 6d. Here the first Court House was erected. It was built of brick, which also formed the floor of the court room, and in 1750 Michael Stump carved and placed over the President's chair the effigy of the King's coat of arms of Great Britain.

Small though the building was, it was the scene of much of historic importance. Here, in 1744, was held the great conference and treaty between the Governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and New York, and the representative of many Indian tribes. Here, probably, was held the conference with the Six Nations in 1757.

The next public building which seems to have been erected was a county jail, in 1739, built of logs. In 1744, Thomas Poultney was directed to make a pair

of stocks and erect a pillory in such place as will be aproved.\*

Religion was not neglected in those early days. James Hamilton donated lots of land to the various churches. The Reformed congregation built a log church in 1736. The establishment of the Lutherans began in 1730. The Episcopalians held services as early as 1717 and 1729, but the parish of St. James was organized in 1744. The Moravians founded St. Andrew's Church in 1744. On its front wall was a carved tablet bearing this legend: "1746, Kysset-den Sohn. Psz. Gloria Pleurae." This stone is now built into the side wall of the present church. The stone chapel, built in 1746, is till standing, and is in use. In 1742 St. Mary's Church of the Assumption (Roman Catholic) was begun. The Presbyterians date back to 1763, and the Hebrews had a congregation and cemetery as early as 1747, the third in point of age in the United States. In their quiet graveyard are interred the parents of Rebecca Gratz, the heroine of "Ivanhoe."

In 1754 Lancaster contained 500 houses and 2,000 inhabitants. It had been incorporated as a borough in 1742. Its first newspaper, the Lancaster Gazette, was issued by H. Miller and S. Holland in 1752. It was published fortnightly, in parallel columns, German and English.

The first school of which we have record is in 1748, under Jacob Loeser, organist and sexton of the Lutheran Church. He had "a free dwelling in part of the school house, use of part of the school lot, ten cords of wood, half being hickory, and the sum of £10 in silver," as his salary.

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\*The first case tried before a petit jury was that of Morris Cannady, for the theft of £14 7s. He was sentenced to restore the amount stolen, and "to receive twenty-one stripes on his bare back, well laid on." Unable to pay the fine imposed and the costs, he was sent to jail for one year and then sold for six years, to John Lawrence, for the sum of £16.

Very curious were some of the laws and customs of "ye olden time."

The Clerk of Common Council supplied the fat oil daily to the Constable for the use of the street lamps on such nights as the moon did not shine. Corporation moonlight, as it was called, held good as late as 1864.

Owners of geese who kept them yoked were exempted from responsibility in case they trespassed on other people's property, as land owners were supposed to keep their fences in good condition to prevent the geese from entering.

Colored persons were compelled to register within twenty-four hours of coming into town, or pay a fine of \$1.00 for every day they remained, or else go to jail.

Markets were to be held twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday, forever in the lot granted for that use, and two fairs therein every year, in June and October.

All labor, except of necessity, was forbidden on the Sabbath, or First Day, under penalty of a fine of 20s. for the use of the poor.

It was forbidden to fire guns in the streets, or to play ball at the Court House.\*

The "Inns" of Lancaster were of importance in "ye olden time." Their landlords were among the most prominent and influential citizens. Their sign-boards made the streets a regular picture gallery. "The Red Lion," where Jefferson, the elder, opened a theatre, in 1830; the "Leopard," or "Spotted Cat," built in 1765; the "Fountain Inn," 1758, now the "Lincoln," where Court was held from 1781 to 1784; "The Grape," 1741; the

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\*In the graveyard connected with one of the churches of the city the interment of persons of illegitimate birth was prohibited. In the burial record of the Moravian Church the interment of a still-born infant is thus noted: "Buried in silence."

"Swan," of the same year; the "Eagle," 1754; the "Black Horse," 1736; the "Indian Queen," 1760; the "Plough," 1748; the "William Pitt," the "General Wayne," the King of Prussia," the "Bear" and the "Cross Keys," 1730, are notable.

A little anecdote from the Journal of March 25, 1796, will show how the "ordinaries" were regarded:

"A man and his wife were traveling. They sat down by the road, exceedingly fatigued. The wife sighed, 'I wish I was in heaven.' The husband replied, 'I wish I was at the tavern.' 'Oh, you old rogue,' says she, 'you always want to get the best place.'"

In 1750 Lancaster is said to have been "remarkable for its wealth and for possessing the best and most intelligent society to be found in America." Even in those early days it was a manufacturing place, and Governor Pownall, visiting the borough in 1754, noted that "a manufactory is here of guns." Whitelock, a Quaker, had a brewery in 1745. Caspar Shaffner, in 1744, was a "blue dyer." In 1772 Caspar Singer had a tannery in operation. Stockings were also made here, and, while the mit-tened hands of our good foremothers knit many a pair out of yarn, in their spare moments, they also used silk. Witness the following letter from Charles Norris to Susannah Wright:

"April 19, 1759.

"I cannot omit mentioning that when Gen'l Amherst was in Town, one Day, his Broth'r was drinking Tea with us when, as a curiosity, thy Silk Stock-ings was produced and my Brother, taking Notice that he seemed much pleased with them, propos'd presenting them to the Gen'l as the 1st pair made here, the Eggs hatched, Balls wound, Silk twisted and Stockings wove in the Province of Pensilv'a. And on the reception he expressed surprise at

the perfection of the first, and declared he would not put them on till he had the pleasure of waiting on his Majesty on his return, (if, please God, he should live to see that day), when he did protest he would display them to the full, and drank the Lady's health who made them."

There seems to have been some difficulty in securing vegetable seeds, as he thus discourses in rhyme:

"When Froggs and Flys, the Land Possess,  
To Moderate the Cold's Excess,  
By croaking throat and Huming Wing,  
Gladly to welcome the approaching Spring,  
When They their watery Council hold,  
And these salute with Bussings Bold,  
We may conclude the Winter's past  
And General Spring approaches fast;—  
Which brings to mind the Gardiner's care,  
To plant and soe all things rare,  
And first we think of Colliflower's tast.  
To soe its Seed with utmost hast,  
And we not regale our watery Chaps,  
With its delicious tast and food,  
For fear the season, she'd Relaps,  
Weh sure wo'd put in Dudgeon mood.  
Then, how shall I the Sequel tell,  
When those Possest with Seed won't sell?"

"CHAS. NORRIS.

"February 15, 1753."

During the French and Indian Wars, between 1754 and 1765, men from Lancaster were enrolled in the Colonial forces. In 1755 preparations were made to build a fort or block house on the north side of the town, between Queen and Duke streets, as a protection against the Indians. March 29, 1757, they made a breach at Rocky Springs, where one man was killed and eleven taken prisoners.

Up to this date, however, her annals are chiefly of local interest; but now the "Inland City" begins to make history.

From her nest, in the green hills, Lancaster had heard, as from afar, the

low mutterings of the storm which culminated in the Revolution. The passage of the Boston Port bill, March, 1774, aroused the colonies to indignation. A meeting of the citizens was called at the Court House, June 15, 1774, to protest against the bill, and on July 9, 1774, in advance of the famous Mecklenberg Declaration, which was not issued until May 31, 1775, the men of Lancaster

“Resolved, That it is an indispensable duty we owe to ourselves and to our posterity to oppose, with decency and firmness, every measure tending to deprive us of our just rights and privileges.”

A “close union of the Colonies” was also recommended.

In December, 1774, a Committee of Observation was elected. They called themselves the “Committee of the Association of the Continental Congress.” They allowed no tea to be sold upon which the stamp tax had been paid; they closed a dancing school, as being unsuitable to the times, and, when the news from Lexington came, the Association of the Freemen solemnly agreed “to defend and protect the religious and civil rights of this and our sister colonies with our lives and fortunes to the utmost of our abilities against any power whatsoever that shall attempt to deprive us of them.” They then organized themselves into companies, to “acquaint themselves with military discipline and the art of war.” They then made arrangements to secure powder, rifles, muskets and bayonets.

On July 4, 1776, a convention of the Associators of Pennsylvania met at Lancaster, to choose two Brigadier Generals to command the battalions and forces of the colony. Daniel Roberdean and James Ewing were elected. Over this convention George Ross presided.

This date marked the birth of a new nation. On it the Declaration of Independence was adopted, and to this paper, on August 2, 1776, George Ross, lawyer, soldier and patriot, in bold and strong characters, affixed his signature. He knew, as did his colleagues, that in case of failure he might say that he was signing his own death warrant. "We are fighting," he said to his son, "with halters around our necks, but we will win." Lancaster has not forgotten him. A pillar and tablet, erected by the Lancaster County Historical Society, marks his country home. A stained glass window is his memorial in St. James' Church. His grave is in Christ Church Cemetery, Philadelphia.

Of the 7,357 militia and 22,198 Continentals furnished by Pennsylvania from 1775 to 1783, Lancaster county furnished her full quota. "Nine regiments complete and very reputably officered," says Rupp, "were raised." A close estimate of the population of the borough in 1775 would give about 3,000, and of these many served in the army.

Many prisoners of war were confined in Lancaster. At times as large a number as 2,000 were in the town, lodged in the barracks, which were subsequently enclosed by a strong stockade. The officers were lodged in one of the public houses. Most notable among them was Major John Andre. Some of the Hessians, captured at Trenton, settled in the county. Some married, and in the church records of such marriages is the statement, "By permission of his commanding officer."

The Continental Congress met in Lancaster on September 27, 1777. The town became famous as a place of supplies for the American forces. Rifles, blankets and clothing were manufactured here. In 1777 Paul Zantzinger furnished General Wayne's men with

650 suits of uniform. Powder was stored here in large quantities, sometimes as much as twenty tons being on hand.

As was but natural, party spirit ran high. Thomas Barton, rector of St. James' Church, loyal to his ordination vows, prayed for the King and the Royal family, and used the prayers ordered by the Parliament, though threatened with violence and death. Finally the church was forcibly closed, and its doors and windows boarded up. He worked faithfully among his own people and among the Indians.

Christopher Marshall, in his "Remembrancer," gives many accounts of events in the daily life of our forefathers. He tells us that President Hancock was in town in 1777; that Lafayette was here on January 29 and February 6, 1778. He notes that three grand balls were given, attended by "a great number of fops, fools, etc., of both sexes." The Hessian Band was paid £15 for each night. Cards were played at \$100 a game, and at one ball every subscriber paid \$300. His Christmas dinner for 1777 consisted of "roast turkey, plain plum pudding and minced pies." He complained that "this is a strange age and place in which I now dwell, because nothing can be had cheap, but lies, falsehood and slanderous accusations." Butter, owing to the depreciation of the Continental currency, was \$40 a pound; milk, 66 cents a quart; bread, \$4 a loaf; a broom, \$4; a skein of thread, \$2, and, when he, in company with three others, Caspar Shaffner, Daniel White-lock and Jacob Miller, drank three pints of Madeira, the cost was \$150. He tells how five men were punished for horse stealing. They were whipped and pilloried, and one had his ears cut off (cropped). He complains bitterly of the poor servants to be had, and, in short, is very entertaining.

There are some of the garments worn in those days still in existence. The brocades worn by the ladies were heavy and rich, of a quality seldom seen in these days. Many of them were cut low, and a "neckerchief" of fine lace, silk or net covered the shoulders. Caps, as a "sign of some degree," adorned the heads. Shoes were made of silk or Damask, and often of the material of the gowns. Patches were very much worn. Fans were very elaborate. One, in the possession of Miss S. J. Myer, is said to have been carried at the "Meschianza," in Philadelphia. It is made of paper, with ladies in hoops adorning it. The ivory handle is evidently of Chinese origin. It folds in such a way as to resemble the handle of a cane. She also has a pair of the brilliant shoe buckles worn by the beaux of the period. Wigs and perukes, white silk hose, gold or jeweled knee-buckles, waistcoats, with silver buttons; lace cravats, some costing £5, made their costumes as expensive as that of the women. But these clothes were handed down as heirlooms from one generation to another. Of this there is proof in our Court records of wills. On August 10, 1746, one, John Rees, bequeathed to Robert Miller, "my Plush Brichas and silver knee Bukels." Trousers did not come into general use until after Revolutionary times. In 1745 Martha Scott left to her daughter, Elizabeth Buchanan, "one creap gown," to her daughter, Mary Donnell, "a Brown Fleming petticoat." August 11, 1742, Cornealus Monohen leaves to Samuel Boyd "my best Suit of Cloaths, which is one new light coloured coat and one lining Hughaback Gackett and Linnon Drawers." In April, 1766, James Dunlap bequeaths to Moses Dunlap "my Clarret Coat and Black Wescoat," and to Robert Dunlap "my setowt coat and

Ratteen Coat." June 22, 1768, George Fleming leaves to Rebecca Fleming "one Gold Ring."

Some of the costumes worn by the men and women of those by-gone days are still to be seen. One "a petticoat," of green satin, over which was worn a brocade "polonese," in Dolly Varden colors, is in the possession of the wife of the rector of St. James'. It belonged to an ancestress of hers, the personal friend of Martha Washington. A number of commissions, signed with the bold characters of John Hancock, are carefully guarded. One is in the hands of the Weaver family.

In the family of Mr. Wm. H. Thackara has been preserved for four generations a miniature of beautiful Peggy Shippen, and a letter to Martha Washington from Benedict Arnold, the arch-traitor, the would-be Iscariot of America.

Several autograph letters of Washington, who visited this city in 1791, are to be found among us. His liqueur case, which he presented to Judge Yeates, is among the most prized possessions of Mrs. S. B. Carpenter. It originally held nine cut-glass bottles, of which four still remain. And a tiny lock of hair from his venerated head is in the hands of Miss S. J. Myer. In our city, too, Washington was first called "The Father of the Country." This appeared in a German almanac, printed by Francis Bailey, in 1779. Its frontispiece was a portrait of Washington on a medalion, in the hand of Fame, who, with the other hand, holds to her lips a bugle, from which are issuing the words, "Des Landes Vater."

With 170 years of history behind her, Lancaster has many sons whom she delights to honor. Lindley Murray, the grammarian, was born in 1745 in the county which one of our Presidents once called "a State in itself."

Benjamin West, born in 1738, passed much of his early life in this city, and here he painted his first picture, "The Death of Socrates." A portrait of Adam Reigart is from his brush, as is the sign of the old tavern, "The Hat," now worn and defaced by age and exposure. Here, too, was born Robert Fulton, in 1765; Gen. Edward Hand, the friend and companion of Washington; Gen. Henry Miller, of Revolutionary fame; Col. Samuel Atlee, Gen. Andrew Porter, Gen. John Clark, Wm. Henry, and his son, Judge John Joseph Henry; William Barton, who designed the great seal of the United States; Judge Jasper Yeates, Edward Shippen, and David Ramsay, the historian. Such are a few of the names on the roll of honor, while, in later days, Bishop Samuel Bowman, as Churchman; Major General John F. Reynolds, as soldier; James Buchanan, as President, and Thaddeus Stevens, as statesman, are names familiar to all of us—

"They do not need our praising,  
For in all hearts is cherished every  
name!"

"With the long line that files into Death's  
portal

They pass, with honor blazoned on  
each breast;

They camp afar, upon the Plains Im-  
mortal,

Each in his tent of Rest!"

MARY N. ROBINSON.

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