

HISTORICAL POINTS OF INTEREST ALONG THE STRASBURG TROLLEY ROAD.

There is scarcely any portion of Lancaster county that does not afford valuable material for the student of local history. Almost any section can be taken up, and with the least pains towards accurate research it is surprising how much that is interesting and often edifying will be the reward.

The new trolley line from Lancaster to Strasburg passes over a route that is not only most picturesque, exhibiting a panorama of rare natural beauty and a landscape approaching the perfection of rural culture, but the whole region is replete with historical interest, and the landmarks of bygone days bear many lessons of value to the present generation.

Starting at Penn Square, the centre of the city, we are within a stone's throw of the site of "Hickory Tree" tavern, kept by George Gibson, the early resort of Indians and of foreign traders, which gave the locality the name of Indian Field and later Gibson's pasture, and with the small cluster of habitations scattered along the King's Highway, now King street, formed the nucleus of the future shire town of Lancaster.

The starting point is also within range of the shadow of what at a later period was one of the most famous public resorts kept first by Joseph Hubley, and afterwards for many years by his widow, Rosina Hubley, on the southeast corner of Penn Square. It was originally established by Matthias Slough as early as 1761, and was called the "White Swan," and later the "Golden Swan." It was to the yard of this central inn that the

raiders known as the "Paxton Boys" came in 1763, determined upon exterminating the Indians, who had been placed for protection in the newly-erected workhouse. Hastily dismounting they turned their horses loose in the yard of the inn, rushed to the workhouse nearby, and massacred all the Indians they found confined therein.

Another ancient hostelry, with quite an interesting history, that stood close by was the Fountain Inn, which was opened in 1758 by Christopher Reigart, who was its landlord through the trying times of the Revolution, and till his death, in 1783. The County Courts were held for several terms in the Fountain Inn while the Court House was in course of construction on Penn Square. A curious old show bill has been preserved advertising a theatre at the Fountain Inn in 1811. The Fountain Inn has given way to the Hotel Lincoln.

In close proximity, at the corner of South Queen and Vine streets, stands the Swan, opened in 1824, and originally named the Lancaster City and County Hotel. When it came into the ownership of Joseph Hubley he named it the Swan, the same as his hotel in Penn Square.

The first square of South Queen street, which is one of our oldest streets, is notable also as having had on either side the residences of some of the best-known of the old-time families, among them the residences and offices of Jasper Yeates, Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, and John R. Montgomery, whose eloquence is a cherished tradition of the Bar, and Thaddeus Stevens, the "Old Commoner," and the brilliant O. J. Dickey and A. Herr Smith, and A. O. Newpher, and W. P. Brinton, and four of Lancaster's most distinguished physicians, Doctors Muhlenberg, and

Carpenter, and A. M. and Patrick Cassidy.

Proceeding down South Queen street we pass the site of the first Friends Meeting House, which was completed in 1759 at a cost of £551, 63s., 3d., according to the records, and where now stands Odd Fellows' Hall, and further down are Zion, Woodward Hill and Greenwood Cemeteries, the first having been established by the vestry of Zion Lutheran Church in 1854, and Woodward Hill a few years earlier by the vestry of Trinity Lutheran Church. At the solicitation of many citizens after it had been established some years, Woodward Hill was made a public cemetery and was chartered March 29, 1851. Lancaster Cemetery was chartered four years previously, on March 8, 1847.

Within view along the route are some of the largest industries of the city, including the immense plant of the Hershey Chocolate Company, the Banner cheroot cigar factory, the Farnum cotton mills, the Miller soap and perfumery works, Carbon steel casting works, the gas works, and the power plant of the Lancaster County' Railway and Light Company. Before reaching the Conestoga creek, we pass the site of the old Conestoga iron furnace, located on Hoffman's Run, built by Robert and James Colvin and George Ford, in 1846, and operated latterly by Peacock & Thomas, until it was dismantled. It was originally a charcoal furnace, supplied with cordwood from the river hills, much of which was transported via the Conestoga-Slackwater navigation.

Coming to the Conestoga creek, we are close by one of the oldest mill sites in the county, now taken up by Levan's flour mill, formerly a fulling, or woolen, mill. We are also on the spot that was the terminus of the Slackwater navigation, where "the

landing" was once the scene of busy commercial activity. The original fording and the first bridge across the creek were at a point about 200 yards east of the present bridge at the extension of a lane running directly south from Queen street.

The history of the navigation of the Conestoga creek is quite interesting. As early as 1805 the idea was entertained of establishing a system of navigation on the Conestoga by means of dams with lift locks, and a charter was obtained for that purpose. Another charter was taken out for the same purpose in 1820, but nothing was done under either of them, and the charters became inoperative.

In 1825 the Conestoga Navigation Company was incorporated, and included among its active promoters were such well-known names as Adam Reigart, Edward Coleman, George B. Porter, Jasper Slaymaker, John F. Steinman, George Lewis Mayer, Hugh Maxwell, John Reynolds, F. A. Muhlenberg, John R. Montgomery, James Humes and others. The work of constructing the dams and locks was commenced promptly, and in the following year the first lock was finished, and the event, we are told, was celebrated with great rejoicing. The Board of Managers embarked on board the beautiful, new boat, "Edward Coleman," at the bridge, and proceeded at the rate of about five miles an hour to the lock, with a band of music on board playing national airs. At the lock was a committee of ladies from Lancaster, under escort of Judge Molton C. Rogers and Dr. Samuel Humes. The ladies, through Mrs. William Jenkins, presented the contractor with a flag and a congratulatory address, and were invited, with their escorts, on board, and the boat proceeded to Reigart's Landing, and in the afternoon returned to the bridge.

The works were completed in due time to Safe Harbor, and embraced nine dams and locks, with a fall of sixty-four feet in a total length of a little over seventeen miles. Subsequently, in 1837, the property passed into the hands of Edward and William Coleman, under the title of the Lancaster and Susquehanna Slack-water Navigation Company, and in the following year a dam was built across the river at Safe Harbor for the purpose of floating packet boats across, which were towed by steamboats, and there was a flourishing traffic for a considerable time.

Crossing the Conestoga over the beautiful new iron bridge that has taken the place of the old covered wooden bridge which was for many years in a dangerous condition of decay, we enter the township of West Lampeter, and run along the Willow Street turnpike, which was one of the old colonial roads forming the main highway to the South; passing the old Steinman powder house, then making a detour to cross Mill Creek close by one of the oldest mill sites, passing in view of the old Lamb Tavern and the widely-known Hollinger tanneries, and thence on the turnpike to Willow Street, we are in the neighborhood of the earliest Swiss Mennonite settlement in Lancaster county. From here the road winds over to Lampeter Square, makes a detour to cross Mill Creek, which is the boundary of Strasburg township, and, passing along the Old Mennonite Church, whose large burying ground contains the graves of some of the most noted of the old pioneers, we soon reach the western limit of the borough of Strasburg, and traverse its main streets for a distance of two miles to the eastern boundary, terminating at the plantation of Major B. Frank Breneman, where is presented a magnificent view of the Pequea

Valley, with the Welsh Mountains in the far distance.

It is to be noted after leaving the southern boundary of the city only a small portion of the route of the railway is in Lancaster township, whose boundary is the Conestoga Creek.

Crossing the creek the greater portion of the line is in West Lampeter, which is one of the original townships that was formed when the county was laid out in 1729. Lampeter was divided into East and West Lampeter in 1841, and was named after Lampeter in Wales, the native place of a few of the first settlers. The Welsh, though few in numbers, were intelligent and influential, and took a prominent part in public affairs; they were more numerous in the eastern and northeastern parts of the county, where they gave names to Caernarvon and Brecknock townships. A myth exists regarding the name of Lampeter, which arose from a statement contained in a curious work of fiction written more than half a century ago by Ezra Lamborn, an old school teacher, residing in the neighborhood of Lampeter Square. In his ambitious attempt to produce a novel, which he entitled, "The Legend of Hell Street Lane, or the Man with Two Heads," our imaginative author set afloat the story that Lampeter township was first called "Lame Peter," in honor of a lame tavern-keeper by the name of Peter Yeordy. Strangely, the story in course of time gained some credence, until it was exposed as a mere flight of the imagination. Lampeter in Wales is a seat of theological learning, and in the Welsh language it signifies "The Church of Peter," or St. Peter's Church.

Lampeter was the birthplace of David Miller, Sheriff of Lancaster county in 1834, who was an eccentric, though amiable character, and who

was familiarly known as "Devil Dave" Miller. He made return of a bench warrant to Judge Lewis on one occasion by riding on his horse up the steps of the Court House and through the main aisle of the court room, dismounting in front of the bench. He kept the Washington House, on East King street, located next to the Farmers' National Bank, and ran what was known as the Blue Line freight cars on the Pennsylvania Railroad. His sister, Ann Miller, survives at the age of 91, and resides in the old homestead at Lampeter Square.

One of the earliest settlements in Lancaster county was made in Lampeter township in the year 1709, and consisted of Swiss Mennonites, who were refugees from the religious persecution and political tyranny that prevailed throughout Germany, France and Switzerland. In the latter part of the seventeenth century a large number of Mennonites from the Swiss cantons and the region of the Rhine known as the Palatinate fled to Alsace, near the ancient city of Strasburg. Attracted by the liberal proposals of William Penn, they were induced to hazard the voyage across the Atlantic and come to what was then literally Penn's Woods, and they made their earliest settlement in Lancaster county in the vicinity of the now flourishing villages of Willow Street and Lampeter.

About midway between these two villages, on the farm of the venerable David Huber, an incorporator of the railway and one of its earliest and most influential champions, and regarded as "the father" of the enterprise, stands well preserved a portion of what is believed to be the oldest house in Lancaster county. It is a model of substantial masonry and solid oak timber work. The first Mennonite Church built in Lancaster

county was erected on this property in 1712, and was used as a school house during the week. The land has passed down through generations of ancestors direct from William Penn to the present owner, who lives in comfortable retirement with his amiable wife, daughter of the late John McCartney, a noted scrivener and conveyancer, the Huber crossing being exactly midway between the terminal points of the railway.

Among the early settlers in the Pequea Valley were Hans Mylin and his sons, Martin and John; Martin Kendig, Hans Herr, Ulrich Brackbill and others, who selected a tract of 10,000 acres, for which they obtained a warrant, October 10, 1710, which was subsequently divided among them by the Surveyor General, on April 27, 1711, and much of the same land is held by their descendants to this day. These early settlers were people of not only great sturdiness and thrift, but of high purpose and most estimable character.

Martin Mylin was a famous preacher and writer, and Hans Herr was their Bishop. The latter was chosen by lot to return to Europe to induce their relatives and others to come to the new country, but his flock were so reluctant to spare him that Martin Kendig, who was an influential leader among them, volunteered to go in his place, and made the hard journey, bringing back with him a considerable number of immigrants. Among those who sought the new land was Matthias Schleiermacher, a man of means and of great force of character, who came from Strasburg, in Alsace, in 1710, and took up a tract of a thousand acres; and tradition credits him with having given the township in which it lay the name of Strasburg, at first "New Strasburg," which was carved out of Leacock in 1759, the latter being so named by a Scotch-Irish

settler, who came from Leacock in Ireland.

There were also among those who were attracted by the Swiss Mennonites, a few French Huguenots, Daniel Ferree, Isaac Lefevre and others, who bought a large portion of the tract taken up by the original Swiss settlers, and this location formed later the township of Paradise, the post town or village being so named by an early settler, Joshua Scott, who, standing where he beheld the beauties of the surrounding country, was so charmed that he declared it should be called Paradise.

Paradise township was separated from Strasburg township in the year 1843. The survey was made by Jacob Hildebrand, the veteran surveyor and conveyancer, of Strasburg, and this was his first employment, when, as a young man, he began the occupation of surveying.

An interesting incident with regard to the village of Paradise is in connection with the well-known and popular ballads of Stephen G. Foster, who was the author of "My Old Kentucky Home," "Old Dog Tray," and other familiar songs. Mr. Foster lived in Kentucky, and sent his songs to his sister, the wife of the Rev. Dr. Edward Yates Buchanan, rector of All Saints' Church, in Paradise. Mrs. Buchanan had a melodeon, and to its accompaniment these songs were first heard in Paradise, and were, therefore, we may say, literally "songs of Paradise." Mrs. Cassatt, wife of A. J. Cassatt, President of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, is a daughter of the late Dr. Buchanan, who was the only brother of President James Buchanan. It is not generally known, perhaps, that President Cassatt spent a portion of his youth in Lancaster county, while his father resided at Hardwick, in Manheim township, which is now part

of the extensive tract adjoining Lancaster city, owned by B. J. McGrann.

The borough of Strasburg is beautifully situated on an elevated ridge of the richest limestone soil. Its history extends back to 1733, when the first house is said to have been built by a man named Hoffman. Soon there was gathered a considerable village, which bore the name of Bettel Hausen (beggar houses), and in 1816 the borough was chartered and given the name of Strasburg. From the earliest period of its history there was a strong sentiment in favor of education, and the town that was the birthplace of so distinguished an educator as Thomas H. Burrowes may justly be said to have been the nursery of the Pennsylvania Free School System. His parents, Thomas Breadon Burrowes and Harriet, his wife, are buried in the old Presbyterian Churchyard in the borough.

Thomas H. Burrowes was born in Strasburg on November 16, 1805. His parents returned to Ireland with their family and remained there for some years, during which time he completed his education at the University of Dublin.

A public meeting was held in January, 1831, in the little brick school house on Jackson street. At this time Mr. Burrowes was a member of the State Legislature, and from this meeting was sent the first petition to the Legislature in favor of public schools, and resulted in the passage of the Act of 1831, appropriating funds for the purpose of establishing public schools, and, later, in 1835, in the formal establishment of the free school system of Pennsylvania.

The celebrated Presbyterian divine, Rev. George Duffield, D.D., was born in Strasburg, July 4, 1796. And on the main street of the borough, in a stone house still standing, was born and

reared Martha, daughter of John Pfoutz, who was the wife of Charles Cameron and mother of General Simon Cameron. The borough was the birthplace of many prominent and most useful public-spirited citizens, and has contributed its quota towards what has made Lancaster county renowned as a "little kingdom within its own domain."

"O Strasburg, O Strasburg,
Eine wunder schoene Stadt,
Darinnen liegt begraben—
Ein mancher, ein schoener,
Ein braver Soldat;
Der sein Vater
Und seine Mutter,
Verlassen hat."

A circumstance in connection with the Strasburg trolley road greatly lamented by the entire community was the untimely death on September 10, 1901, of Amos Hollinger, the first president of the company, and one of the incorporators and original projectors. In the success of the enterprise much was due to his energetic efforts and the unbounded confidence every one felt in his integrity and business judgment, and there was universal regret that he was not spared to see actually realized his long cherished desire for a trolley line in his neighborhood.

Two of his associates who rendered invaluable assistance at the beginning of the enterprise, George W. Hensel, Cashier of the First National Bank of Strasburg, and Jacob L. Ranck, residing immediately east of the borough in Strasburg township, were greatly influential in determining the route and assuring final success. All who are connected with the company are felicitated on the good judgment displayed in respect to the route and sagacity exercised in forming permanent connection with the Conestoga Traction Company, and, finally, the success in constructing and equipping the railway

in a manner that has fully met public expectations and secured to the people excellent transportation facilities with comfortable and frequent service from early morning until late in the night.

It is, however, only what is due from this generation, in the course of progress, to the spirit of enterprise, the thrift, and the perseverance of their sturdy ancestors who converted the wilderness into a blooming garden.

WALTER M. FRANKLIN.

Author: Franklin, Walter M.

Title: Historical points of interest along the Strasburg trolley
road / by Walter M. Franklin, Esq.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): Street-railroads--Pennsylvania--Lancaster County.
Lancaster County (Pa.)--Description and travel.
Lancaster County (Pa.)--History.

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society,
1902-3

Description: [3]-14 p. ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 7,
no. 1

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.7

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

=====

+++++

Institution Name

Institution Address

Institution Phone Number

Institution E-mail Address