

WASHINGTON IN LANCASTER.

A Third Visit by the Father of His Country
to this City in October, 1794.

It is well known that General Washington paid several visits to Lancaster, the first on July 4, 1791, and again on the 20th and 21st of September, 1796. It has been thought that he must have passed through this city at other times on his way to and from Mount Vernon, but so far no record of such a visit has been found.

In the current number of the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* we find in an excellent article by W. S. Baker, on "Washington After the Revolution," a reference to one of Washington's letters, which shows clearly he was in this city in 1794, on his return from Carlisle, whither he had gone to inspect the army destined to operate against the insurgents in western Pennsylvania, better known as the "Whisky Insurrection."

The letter was written to Alexander Hamilton, and is dated Sunday, October 26, 1794. He writes:

"At Wright's Ferry, on the Susquehanna. Thus far I have proceeded without accident to man, horse or carriage, altho' the latter has had wherewith to try its goodness; especially in ascending the North Mountain from Skinners by a wrong road; that is, by the old road which never was good and is rendered next to impassible by neglect.

I rode yesterday afternoon through the rain from Yorktown to this place, and got twice in the height of it, being (and delayed by that means) on the rocks in the middle of the Susquehanna. . . . I do not intend further than Lancaster to-day. But on Tuesday, if no accident happens, I expect to be landed in the city of Philadelphia.

GENERAL WASHINGTON

THE GUEST OF LANCASTER CITY.

An Old Tradition Cleared Up and Verified.
The Father of His Country Our Guest
in the Summer of 1791 and What
Was Said on the Occasion.

There has been a tradition afloat in this city that President Washington paid this city a visit during his first Presidential term, but in the absence of the necessary documentary proof some of our best local historians have been inclined to doubt the rumor.

It remained, however, for a newspaper man, Mr. George R. Prowell, and a noted historical writer, now in this city in the interests of the National Cyclopaedia of Biography, to bring the fact to light, he having discovered it in one of the volumes of the Yeates Library now in the Court House, and it is through his courtesy that we are enabled to lay the entire event with all its surroundings before our readers.

That George Washington was the guest of the citizens of Lancaster on July 4, 1791, and participated in the demonstrations celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of American Independence is a fact of interesting history heretofore unpublished.

In the year 1790 he had made a triumphant tour of the Eastern States, and soon after the adjournment of the First Congress he set out on a tour through the Southern States, where he was everywhere received with tokens of veneration, love and respect. Philadelphia was then the seat of government, and he left that city at noon on March 21, 1791, for Mt. Vernon. His equipage consisted of a handsome white coach, built for the occasion by Mr. Clarke, of Philadelphia, drawn by four horses, a baggage wagon drawn by two horses, four saddle horses and one horse led with these, his valet, two footmen, a coachman and a postilion. Major Jackson accompanied him on the entire trip. They went by way of Wilmington, Delaware, crossed the Chesapeake Bay to Annapolis, Maryland, and proceeded to Georgetown, where he met the commissioner appointed to lay out the District of Columbia, and locate the site of the National Capital and the Presidential mansion. Having accomplished this work to his satisfaction, he went to Mount Vernon, and after remaining there one week departed on his eventful tour, going as far south as Savannah, Georgia. His approach to all the Southern towns was announced by salvos of artillery and the ringing of bells. A reception and banquet were given in his honor by the authorities of

every town and he was always received with the greatest demonstrations of joy.

Washington was then in the height of his fame. His great achievements as a soldier and his renown as a statesman were universally recognized. His name was honored and revered in every American household, and his attributes of greatness recognized by the entire civilized world.

Having followed him over the entire route he travelled, on this Southern tour in search of facts and incidents of historic interest and value, it is my pleasure herewith to record the last public reception given in his honor on his return trip to Philadelphia.

Gen. Washington came here from York. He arrived there on the second day of July and was given a public reception by the inhabitants of that historic town, which for nine months of the darkest period of the Revolution had been the seat of the government. Congress held its sessions during that period in the county Court House, and while there passed Articles of Confederation. Gen. Washington was then in command of the main body of the American army at Valley Forge, and never in that eventful winter of 1777-8 was enabled to visit York or Lancaster.

The President made the following brief note in his diary for July 3, 1791:

"I attended English services at the German Reformed Church, there being no services in the English (Episcopal) Church at this time. I then departed for Wright's Ferry accompanied by a delegation of citizens of York in order to be present at Lancaster at the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of American Independence."

A delegation of prominent citizens of Lancaster went on horseback to Wright's Ferry (Columbia) to meet him and escort him here. A short distance out on the Columbia pike he left his coach, mounted one of his horses and rode into town amidst the greatest enthusiasm at six o'clock on Sunday evening.

A German almanac, published in Lancaster in 1779 by Francis Bailey, was the first to denominate him the "Father of His Country." A noble spirit of patriotism and a profound veneration for Washington pervaded the entire community, and all the old soldiers of the Revolution throughout the county came to town to see their former chief.

The next day was Monday, the Fourth of July, the fifteenth anniversary of American Independence, and every effort was made by the citizens of the borough to do honor to the distinguished guest and fitly celebrate the joyous occasion. Gen. Edward Hand, who had himself achieved distinction and war fame as an officer in the Revolution, was then the most conspicuous citizen of Lancaster county. He, with the other burgesses of the town, at the request of the inhabitants, waited upon the President and delivered the following address:

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To George Washington, President of the United States.

SIR: On behalf of the inhabitants of the Borough of Lancaster, the members of the corporation beg leave to congratulate you on your arrival at this place. On this joyful occasion they approach the first Magistrate of the Union, with hearts impressed with no less grateful respect than their fellow citizens of the East and of the South. With them they have admired those talents and that firm prudence in the field, which finally ensured success to the American arms. But at this time reference forbids the language that would naturally flow from the recapitulation of the events of the late glorious revolution. The faithful page of history will record your illustrious actions for posterity. Yet we can't forbear mentioning what we, in our day, have beheld and witnessed. We have seen you at the awful period, when the storm of war was bursting around us and our fertile plains were deluged with the richest blood of America, rise above adversity and exerting all the talents of the patriot and the hero to save our country from the threatened ruin, and when, by the will of Heaven, those exertions had restored peace and prosperity to the United States and the grand object for which you drew the sword was accomplished, we have beheld you, adorned with every private social virtue, mingling with your fellow-citizens. Yet that transcendent love of country, by which you have always been actuated, did not suffer you to rest here, but when the united voice of myriads of freemen, your fellow-citizens, called you from the repose of domestic life, actuated solely by principles of true glory, not seeking your own aggrandizement, but sacrificing the sweets of retired life to the wishes and happiness of your country, we have beheld you possessed of the confidence of a great people, presiding over their councils and by your happy administration uniting them together by the great political bond of one common interest. It is therefore that the inhabitants of this borough seize with joy the only opportunity which is offered to them to testify their approbation of, and their gratitude for, your services. Long, very long, sir, may you enjoy the affections of your fellow citizens. We pray for a long continuance of your health and happiness and the choicest blessings of Heaven on our beloved country, and on you, its Father and its friend.

Signed on behalf of themselves and the inhabitants of the Borough of Lancaster.

EDWARD HAND,
PAUL ZANTZINGER,
Burgesses.
JOHN HUBLEY,
ADAM REIGART,
JACOB KRUG,
CASPER SHAFNER,
JACOB FREY,
Assistants.

To the above address Washington responded as follows:

To the corporation and inhabitants of the Borough of Lancaster.

GENTLEMEN: Your congratulations on my arrival in Lancaster are received with pleasure and the flattering expressions of your esteem are replied to with sincere regard. While I confess my gratitude for the distinguished estimation in which you are pleased to hold my public services, a sense of justice to my fellow citizens ascribes to other causes the peace and prosperity of our highly favored country. Her freedom and happiness are founded in their patriotic exertions and will, I trust, be transmitted to distant ages through the same medium of wisdom and virtue. With sincere wishes for your social, I offer an individual prayer for your individual welfare.

G. WASHINGTON.

At 3 o'clock the President and a very large number of citizens sat down to an elegant entertainment, provided for the occasion, in the Court House, then situated in Centre Square.

After dinner the following toasts were drunk:

1. "The Day and all who Honor It;"
2. "The United States;"
3. "The Legislature of the Union—May it always be guided by the 'genuine maxim of an honest, magnanimous policy.'" (see the President's inaugural address);
4. "The King and National Assembly of France;"
5. "The Marquis de La Fayette"
6. "The Friendly European Powers;"
7. "The Memory of those Patriots and Heroes who fought and fell in the glorious cause of American Liberty;"
8. "The General Prevalence of Religion and Morality;"
9. "Agriculture and Commerce;"
10. "May the Example of America and France be Productive of True Liberty to every Nation on the Globe;"
11. "May the Rights of Man be Understood, and be Preserved Inviolable in our Great Republic;"
12. "The Fair Daughters of America;"
13. "May the Lamp of Science continue to illuminate this Western World to the end of Time;"
14. "The Memory of the American Patriot, Statesman and Philosopher—Benjamin Franklin;"
15. "May the oppressed of all nations find an asylum in America."

The President then gave "The Governor and State of Pennsylvania" and retired, when the company rose and volunteered the "illustrious President of the United States."

A local chronicler says: "The day was spent with the greatest harmony, and every heart was gladdened by the presence of so great and good a man."

General Washington arrived in Philadelphia about noon on the sixth of July in perfect health. His approach to that city was announced by the firing of cannon and the ringing of bells. He had been absent from the seat of government from March 21 until July 6 of the same year.

GEORGE R. PROWELL.