

THE TIMES OR WEEKLY PORCUPINE

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

ON January 3rd, 1798, Johann Albrecht und Comp. (John Albright and Co.) established a German weekly newspaper in Lancaster borough, the title of which was "Der Deutsche Porcupin und Lancaster Anzeigs-Nachrichten." The Library of Congress has a file of this paper which is fairly complete, lacking but a few numbers. The first issue preserved in that great library is dated January 3rd, 1798; the last, December 25th, 1799. On January 1st, 1800, the name of the paper was changed to "Der Americanische Staatsbothe und Lancaster Anzeigs-Nachrichten."

In the issue of Wednesday, February 14th, 1798, John Albright and Co. issued a proposal for publishing, in English, a paper entitled "The Times or Weekly Porcupine," which was as follows:

"Not with any intention of injuring the establishment of any periodical publication, have we issued this proposal; but, being encouraged by a large and respectable number of inhabitants of the borough and county of Lancaster, and their liberality towards the prosecution of so arduous, though laudable, undertaking, we have realized a belief that this proposal appears under favorable auspices. We are confident that the promoting of truth, the disseminating of rational and political knowledge, the exterminating of the new French philosophy, and of Jacobin principles, (which shall be the principal objects of the intended publication) cannot fail of meeting with the warmest patronage of the well-wishers of America, the friends of government, the enemies of foreign influence, and an unbiased public at large.

"The proposers deem it here superfluous to make any comment on the utility of this undertaking; but flatter themselves with an idea that the execution of their work will answer every expectation, and speak its own praise. They herewith submit the following terms to the consideration of the public, declaring that nothing shall be wanting on their side to procure the earliest and most authentic intelligence, in order to render 'The Times' a publication of general utility.

"CONDITIONS.

I. "The Times, or Weekly Porcupine,' will be published every Friday morning, from entirely new type, and on paper of royal size.

II. "It will contain a comprehensive sketch of the most recent foreign and domestic news; debates and proceedings of our National and State Legislatures; agricultural, manufacturing and commercial information of the Union; poetry, moral extracts, anecdotes,—in short, whatever may tend to the instruction and amusement of the reader.

III. "Price to subscribers will be two dollars per annum; half to be paid on receiving the first number, and the remainder at the expiration of the year.

IV. "Communications calculated to advance the interest of the community, will ever meet with a welcome reception.

V. "Advertisements making a square, will be inserted three times for one dollar; those of a greater length in proportion.

"Subscriptions are received at the printing office hereof, in Prince street, near the prison; at the bookstore of Jacob Lahn, King street, Lancaster; and at the respective places where subscription papers are lodged."

In "Der Deutsche Porcupein" of Wednesday, May 16th, 1798, appeared an announcement in which it was stated that the first issue of "The Times or Weekly Porcupine" would be published on Friday, May 25th."¹

That the paper was published, as advertised, is evident from the following statement which appeared in the German paper under date of Wednesday, June 13th, 1798:

"The public is respectfully informed that the editors, being encouraged to a continuance of 'The Times or Lancaster Weekly Porcupine,'² (published at the office of this gazette), cannot hesitate of complying with the demand. They return their sincere thanks to those by whom they have hitherto been so liberally encouraged; a continuance of which is solicited by the publishers."

We do not know how long "The Times" was published, nor has a single issue of it survived the destroying hand of passing years, so far as we have been able to ascertain. The paper is not listed in that compendious work entitled "A Bibliography of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 1745-1912," prepared by Miss Lottie M. Bausman, and published by the Pennsylvania Federation of Historical Societies in 1916.

¹ When this paper was established in Lancaster in May, 1798, there was a weekly entitled "The Lancaster Journal" published in English in the borough. It was founded in June, 1794.

² The word "Lancaster" appears in the title for the first time in this announcement.