

How Lancaster Grew and What People Thought of It

By M. LUTHER HEISEY

Approaching the bi-centennial year of the establishing of Lancaster as a borough, it is well for us to turn in retrospective thought and consider what manner of town Lancaster was, how it grew, and what people visiting it for a season thought of it. It was Robert Burns who wished for the gift to see ourselves as others see us. Gathered in the following lines are the comments—favorable and unfavorable—of many persons, and through their visions and impressions we gain the power that the poet longed for—here we have a chance to see ourselves as others saw us.

But let us take these observations with the proverbial grain of salt—especially the unfavorable ones. Much depended upon the observer's point of view and prejudices. Should one walk along Orange Street of present-day Lancaster he would say, "Here is a city of churches." Should another walk along some other street, he might be led to say it is a city of tap-rooms. We are reminded of the story of three blind men in India who were taken to "see" an elephant. The first one, touching the elephant's leg, likened the beast unto a tree trunk; the second touching the elephant's ear thought it was like a fan; while the third, touching the tail, said an elephant resembled a rope. With these reflections in mind, let us not take too seriously what we hear of early Lancaster, that is, the unfavorable part of the comments.

Before the year of 1742, when Lancaster became a borough, the town was of little importance. At first Indian wigwams alone marked the site; by 1722 a few squatters had settled here, and George Gibson had a tavern near a spring by a hickory tree.¹

Foulke tells us there was but a single dwelling here in 1728; Lieut. Governor Patrick Gordon says Lancaster was founded this year.² Henry Slay-

¹ Because of the tree, the early Indians located here were known as the Hickory Tribe; the town became known as Hickory Town. Other names for it were Gibson's Pasture, Indian Town, Spring Town and Waving Hills. See Rupp's *History of Lancaster County*, p. 135.

² Rupp, p. 135.

maker was one of the men who assisted in clearing the ground for the site of Lancaster, and it was another Slaymaker (doubtless a descendant) who in later years kept a hotel where formerly Gibson had his tavern.³

A writer in *Hazard's Register* states that the town of Lancaster was laid out in 1730, and that Governor Andrew Hamilton "made an offer of two places, one known as the 'high plain,' also by the name of 'Gibson's Pasture,' afterwards 'Sanderson's Pasture,' at present (1831) the property of John Montgomery, Esq. The other situation was the Hillside (Waving Hills) extending from its summit on the east to Roaring Brook on the west, covered with woods. The public road ran through it, and Gibson's house of entertainment would be included, which stood nearly opposite a fine spring communicating with the dark swamp, and with the Widow Buchanan's cake and beer house situate near where the road crossed the Brook. There were several springs, and the brook was thought favorable for the erection of water machinery. The spot was fixed upon and the plot of Lancaster made in 1730 in regular squares, open lots were reserved in the center and adjoining the public square for the courthouse, public offices, market, etc. The long swamp (which ran in the rear of Dr. DuFresne's) was drained by a ditch cut into Roaring Brook. The springs no longer run but a pump was in Mr. Rathfon's, placed in one spring at a short depth, and which yields water of an excellent quality. It is thought that with little expense water could be obtained from four or five such courses and would supply our whole city for every purpose that might possibly be required."

If that is a true picture of the site of Hamilton's Lancaster, could anything be more forbidding—woods everywhere, the Dark Hazel Swamp to the south, the Long Swamp to the north, and the Roaring Brook rushing along what is now called Water Street! New Lancaster was on a "detour." The Great Conestoga Road, or Long Lane, passed some miles to the south of it; Old Peter Bezallion's Road and the Paxton Pike passed it many miles to the north. Even after forty-five years had passed a commentator said that Lancaster was "far in the wilds remote from public view." But enough of this, lest I be accused of disloyalty to my townstead. As the years of our story unfold, they present a brighter picture, for the inhabitants were of sturdy stock and aspired to the full measure of a Lancastrian, for "they win or die who wear the rose of Lancaster."

On May 16, 1730, Governor Andrew Hamilton conveyed in trust three lots "in the town of Lancaster." These were the public square, described as beginning at a post by High (now King) Street, thence east three degrees north 66 feet, etc.;⁴ the second lot, 120 feet square, was assigned for a town hall and market house; the third, 120 by 148 feet, was the prison lot. Is this a disturbing fact, to note that the prison lot was larger than either the town square or the market place? The town claimed 200 inhabitants this first

³ Near the location of Hertzler's store, 13 East King Street. See Rupp's pp. 128, 135.

⁴ This indicates that Queen Street does not run due north but inclines three degrees toward the west.

year, and that without a "Chamber of Commerce." Lots sold rapidly under the ground-rent plan at seven shillings. As a stimulus to building the deeds stipulated that all purchasers "should make, erect, build, and finish on each and every lot, at their own cost and charge, a sufficient dwelling house, of the dimensions of sixteen feet square at least, with a good chimney of brick or stone to be laid with lime and sand."⁵ The lots reverted to the Hamiltons if no such building was erected within two years. This measure insured a rapid construction program, and the town claimed a population of 700 in 1734.

In 1736 dire threats were made by Thomas Cresap, a prisoner taken in the boundary troubles and lodged in the local jail. He claimed his compatriots would journey from Maryland and "burn Lancaster to ashes." This was too much for the local officials, who forthwith had their menacing lodger removed to the jail at Philadelphia. In October, 1737, a party of Marylanders again menaced Lancaster, broke into the jail, and released sixteen of their number, who had been arrested in boundary disputes.⁶

Still growing, Lancaster claims a population of 1000 in 1738.⁷ George Gibson, although one of the first settlers, did not obtain a deed for land until January 14, 1740; then he secured lot No. 221.

THE BEGINNING OF THE BOROUGH

The foregoing lines introduce Lancaster as a new settlement. Now—May 1, 1742—Lancaster takes on the responsibility and dignity of a borough through a charter granted by Governor George Thomas in the name of King George II.⁸ There were less than 1200 people in the new borough, giving it the size and importance of present-day Quarryville, but with many more public officials. In fact, it took two burgesses, with six assistants to conduct the business of the borough. Be it said to the everlasting credit of these officials that the very first ordinance passed regulated work and business on the Sabbath day, and fined any offender twenty shillings, which money would be devoted "to the use of the poor."⁹ What a shock to their pious minds, what a contrast these times would present with their Sunday business, pleasure seeking, movies and base ball!

On Thursday, June 21, 1744, Witham Marshe, Secretary to the Commissioners of Maryland, representing that province at the treaty with the Six Nations held at Lancaster, had this to say of the young town: "This town has not been begun to be built above sixteen years. It is conveniently laid out into sundry streets, and one main street, in the midst of which stands the courthouse and market. Through this runs the road to the back country on the Susquehanna. There are several cross streets on each side of the main street, which are indifferently well built, as to quantity of houses.

⁵ Ellis and Evans' *History of Lancaster County*, p. 368.

⁶ Rupp's *History of York County*, pp. 561, 563.

⁷ *Hazard's Register*, Vol. 5, p. 115.

⁸ The complete charter is printed in *Hazard's Register*, Vol. 3, p. 397.

⁹ Ellis and Evans' *History*, p. 372.

"The inhabitants are chiefly High-Dutch, Scotch-Irish, some few English families, and unbelieving Israelites, who deal very considerably in this place.

"The spirit of cleanliness has not as yet in the least troubled the major part of the inhabitants, for in general they are very great sluts and slovens. When they clean their houses, which, by the bye, is very seldom, they are unwilling to remove the filth far from themselves, for they place it close to their doors, which in the summer time breeds an innumerable quantity of bugs, fleas and vermin. . . .

"The houses for the most part are built and covered with wood, except some few which are built of brick and stone. They are generally low, seldom exceeding two stories. . . .

"There are hills which environ Lancaster, as likewise some thick woods, which in the summer render it very hot, especially in the afternoon. The soil is then dry and very sandy, which when fresh wind blows almost chokes the inhabitants.

"The water here is very bad, occasioned by their springs, and even wells, being stored with limestone. . . . They have a very good market in this town, well filled with provisions of all kinds and prodigiously cheap."

Witham certainly had a dark brown taste in his mouth, and a ruffled disposition, when he looked over little Lancaster. Perhaps in some respects Lancaster could have been cleaner, and we will charitably attribute Mr. Marshe's irritable reaction to the fact that he had but two hours' sleep on his first night's visit to Peter Worrall's inn, due to little inmates who shared sleeping quarters with him, and caused his fellow-traveler, Mr. Benedict Calvert, to find rest the following night on the courthouse floor!

In 1745 there were 300 houses in Lancaster,¹⁰ with a population of about 1500. An attempt was made this year to drain and clear of wood the Dark Hazel Swamp in the town.¹¹

In October, 1748, the Rev. John Frederick Handschuh, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, wrote: "Lancaster is a town of about 400 houses, to which new ones are always being added . . . Mostly inhabited by Germans Because of the 'good living,' people are always moving here, so that it very probably may become a very large and populous city in a few years. It has a rather large Lutheran, an unfinished Anglican, a Reformed, a little Catholic, and a Zinzendorfian church."¹²

Another favorable comment, which would fill the old burgesses with pride, read: "In the town of Lancaster, a place at that time (cir. A. D. 1750) remarkable for its wealth, and which has the reputation of possessing the best and most intelligent Society to be then found in America. It was chiefly inhabited by Germans, who, of all people, is the practice of Imigrating, carry along with them the greatest Stock of knowledge and accomplishments."¹³

¹⁰ Schmauk's *Lutheran Church in Pennsylvania*, p. 301.

¹¹ Rupp, p. 243.

¹² *Halle Reports*, Vol. 1, p. 145.

¹³ John Galt's *"Life and Times of Benjamin West, Esq., President of the Royal Academy of London."* Philadelphia, 1816, p. 47.

For the first eight years of borough life, the town was almost solely governed by the English. The Lutheran pastor, the Rev. John Frederick Handschuh, solemnly complains that the local government "was in the hands of the Quakers with whom were associated a few frivolous and coarse-minded Englishmen," who winked at violations of the law. "They punish no offense. They do not restrain the greatest disorder, and in order to retain the favor of the people they flatter them. They are favorable to all sects except the Lutherans. How wretched this state of affairs was both prior to and also long since my arrival in our town, no pen can describe. In short, everyone does as he wishes, and the more wantonness one practices the more highly he thinks of this kind of government: for he knows that no offense will be punished."

But on September 19, 1749, Pastor Handschuh has great cause for rejoicing, for now there will be a change in affairs. This lone representative of a "Law and Order Society" is elated as several members of his congregation are elected to town offices—these Germans replacing the Englishmen. Dr. Adam Simon Kuhn was elected chief burgess, another member was elected assistant burgess, one was to be the town's high constable, and five others became assessors. Handschuh wrote in his diary: "I rejoice with particular heartiness that almost all our Lutherans in response to my earnest plea of last Sunday avoided the customary disturbance at this election. Heretofore complaints were brought against no one more frequently than the Lutherans. From this new government we can anticipate much good for our town and congregation, if it discharges its duty with fidelity, and with honesty."¹⁴

The rapid strides that Lancaster made in the first eight years of borough life are shown by Mittelberger's observations. They reveal the progressive and cultural steps made by our people; of the four printing presses in Pennsylvania, Lancaster had one (the others were in the Philadelphia district); of the six church organs in Pennsylvania one was located here; of the three great roads leading from Philadelphia, one reached to Lancaster.¹⁵ Within the decade (in 1759) Lancaster had established the Juliana Library, it being one of the five libraries then in Pennsylvania. In another two years (1752), Henry Miller and Samuel Holland were printing newspapers in the old town—the *Lancaster Gazette*, a bi-lingual paper. The population had grown to 1500. Another two years pass and Governor Pownall visits Lancaster, writing in his journal: "Lancaster, a growing town and making money; a manufactory here of saddles and pack-saddles. It is a stage town; 500 houses, 2000 inhabitants."¹⁶

Another observer wrote: "When Governor Pownall visited Lancaster there was not one good house in the town; the houses were chiefly of frame filled in with stone, of logs, and a few of stone. . . . The Lancaster town was too large, at an early period, in proportion to the population of the surrounding

¹⁴ *Halle Reports*, Vol. 1, p. 542.

¹⁵ Gottlieb Mittelberger's *Journey to Pennsylvania in the Year 1750*, p. 101.

¹⁶ *Hazard's Register*, Vol. 6, p. 29.

country, and its inhabitants suffer much from want of employment; as from its local situation, remote from water, it was not, nor could it ever possibly become, a place of business. The proprietor was therefore wrong in forcing the building and settlement of Lancaster. The town outgrew its strength, and looks dull and gloomy in consequence."

There is a wide diversity of opinion in these two comments written in the same year, but we prefer the testimony of Governor Pownal.

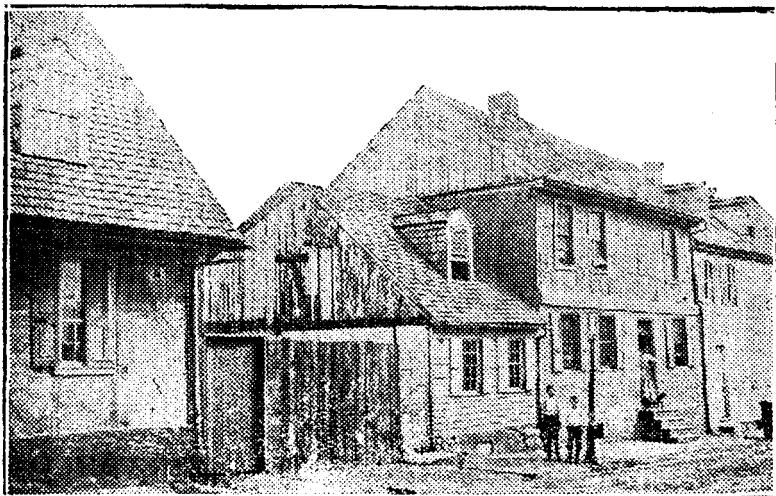
William Johnston, writing on Braddock's Campaign, in a letter dated September 23, 1755, has to say of Lancaster: "You will not see many inland towns in England so large as this, and none so regular; and yet this town, I am told, is not above twenty-five years' standing, and a most delightful country around it. It is mostly inhabited by Dutch people."

INDIAN TROUBLES

The one cloud to appear on the horizon was the French and Indian War. There was a rumor—fortunately false—"that the French had made a raid into Pennsylvania in November, 1755, and had taken Lancaster."¹⁷

A few years later (1762), David Zeisberger and Frederick Post, Moravian missionaries, came into Lancaster at the head of thirty Indians, "while three

¹⁷ Mittelberger, p. 102.



OLD HALF-TIMBERED HOUSES

Stood on Middle Street (now called Howard Avenue). The large one was used to confine British prisoners during the Revolutionary War. Demolished in 1886, when South Shippen Street was opened through this section.

hundred more from all parts of the province were gathered together in an encampment just west of the town, and nightly terrified the inhabitants by the hideous noise of their drunken carousals." The Moravian chronicler writes further: "One evening these savages startled our little congregation exceedingly by appearing during the evening service and filling all the windows with their swarthy faces. Some of them had large knives in their hands."¹⁸

On December 1, 1755, Edward Shippen wrote a letter to James Hamilton, Esq., in which he stated: ". . . . An alarm, last night, about twelve o'clock; we assembled in the square, say, three hundred, but with fifty guns; it was shocking to hear at such a moment, when in expectation of the savages, that we had neither a sufficiency of guns, nor ammunition. Thanks be to God, the alarm was false The block-house will be built on the north side of the north end of Queen Street. There will be a wide ditch around it, a small draw-bridge; one important use is to place our wives, girls and children within, that they may be in safety. . . . These are fearful times. God only knows how they will end."¹⁹

There is a pretty legend in the annals of the First Reformed Church concerning a young maiden of sixteen, Salome Le Roy, who rushed into the church tower at midnight during those dangerous times to ring the bell as a warning to the citizens of the approach of marauding Indians.²⁰

In 1760 the Rev. Thomas Barton wrote, "Lancaster is a large town having near 600 houses, inhabited chiefly by Germans of almost every religious denomination." Four years later the same preacher said: "The town of Lancaster contains about 600 houses, and is a very respectable and wealthy place." And it may be added a very accommodating and sociable place with its 54 taverns listed in the following year.²¹

An observer in 1766 notes that this "county town contains at least 600 houses, many of which are extremely neat and make a good appearance, being built of brick and cut stone. It contains . . . about 3000 souls. The lowness and unevenness of its situation are amply compensated by its convenience for trade. . . . There are three regular fire companies established here which have two good fire engines, etc. . . . On the whole, it may be observed, without incurring the censure of partiality, that Lancaster stands foremost of all inland towns on the continent of America."²²

THE PITY OF IT — NO NAVIGATION!

In 1771 Jacob Duche wrote: "We arrived at Lancaster, a large and flourishing town, about 60 miles from hence (Philadelphia). Its trade to this city is very considerable. But, as it is not situated on navigable water, this trade is carried on by means of large covered waggons, which travel in great numbers

¹⁸ Klein's *History of Lancaster County*, p. 856.

¹⁹ Rupp, p. 336.

²⁰ Worner, *Old Lancaster-Tales and Traditions*, pp. 242-245.

²¹ L. Co. Hist. Soc., Scrap Book, #81, p. 194.

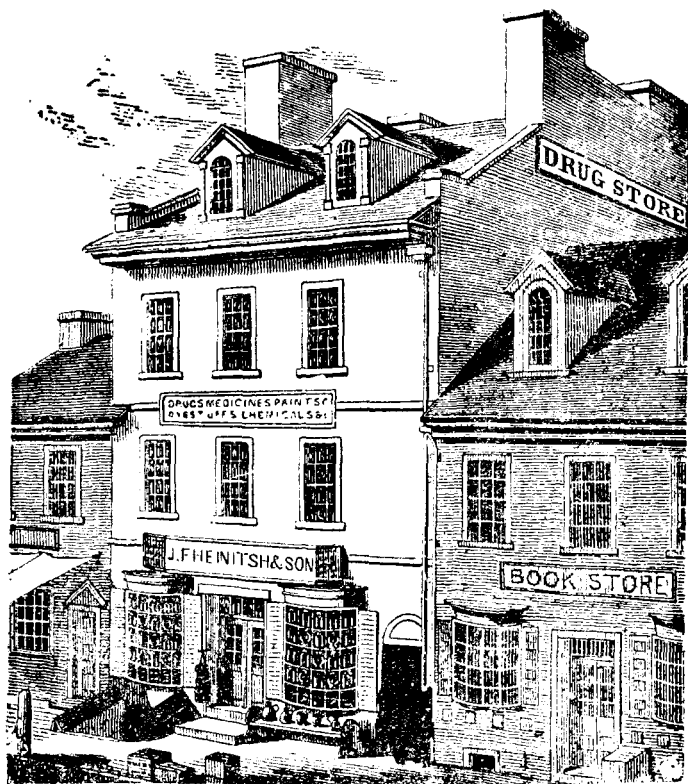
²² From the Charter of the Juliana Library Company. See Vol. 33, pp.

to Philadelphia (sometimes, as I have been informed, there being about one hundred in a company) carrying down the produce of the country, and returning with all kinds of stores and merchandise.”²³

In 1772 Dr. David McClure passed through Lancaster on the way to Ohio and wrote: “Lancaster is the largest inland town on the Continent. It is situated in the center of an extensive valley.” He further observed that German was the language principally used. He noted the number of churches here, and was impressed with the evangelistic work done in the town by the Lutheran pastor, the Rev. Henry Helmutz (Helmuth).²⁴

²³ From “Caspina Letters,” by Jacob Duche, D.D., of Philadelphia, October, 1771.

²⁴ L. Co. Hist. Soc., Vol. 5, p. 109.



OLD HEINITSH DRUG STORE

Stood on East King Street near the Square. Note the bulging type of display windows; outside folding shutters were used to cover them at night.

A writer at Philadelphia, in 1775, states: "There was a road to Lancaster, of which we sometimes heard as a place 'far in wilds remote from public view,' which might be reached in three days' journey."²⁵ But what a delightful haven Lancaster proved to be to Philadelphians and others when the British approached to Brandywine and the Quaker City! And we could tell this same Philadelphian that this little town in the "remote wilds" was progressive and intelligent enough to formulate and promulgate a "Declaration of Independence" of their own over two full years before the now famous Declaration was written; and it contained "Declarations" and "Resolves" that had the genuine ring of the great document.²⁶

A British prisoner, Capt. J. F. D. Smyth, detained in Lancaster in 1776, said of the town, "It is neither handsome or agreeable. Food is very plentiful. The markets abound with most excellent cyder and provisions."²⁷

Another British traveler (1776) wrote, "This is a large town, but the situation is disagreeable between two hills; several good buildings and some manufactories of guns and woolen, but no navigation."²⁸

Writing to a member of Congress, a Philadelphian, through hearsay, notes: "By all I can find you will be so sick of Lancaster as to determine upon York speedily . . . Mr. S. A. (Samuel Adams) was little inclined to go to Lancaster. . . ." (September 24, 1777.)²⁹ But hard on the heels of this, an actual visitor the next month observes: "Lancaster was at this period the largest inland town in America, containing about 1000 houses . . . It is situated in one of the most lovely and luxuriant regions in the country. . . . Here existed extensive manufactures, especially of the rifles so fatal in the hands of our patriotic yeomanry."³⁰ A Hessian prisoner thought this place was "a large and pretty city."³¹

And now, June 19, 1777, the borough asks for a new charter, discarding the one signed by King George II. The State Assembly passed an act re-establishing the borough, with all of the rights of the old charter and all acts supplementary to it. The old seal, bearing the insignia of royalty, was ordered to be destroyed and a new one substituted for it.³²

The minds of some British officers, prisoners in the colonies, seemed to run in like channels, for the following comment by Lieut. Thomas Amburey coincides, especially in regards to provisions and cider, with Capt. Smyth's remarks: "The town of Lancaster is the largest inland town in America; it contains at least 10,000 inhabitants [actually less than 3000], chiefly Germans

²⁵ *Hazard's Register*, Vol. 3, p. 41.

²⁶ Rupp, p. 378.

²⁷ Worner, p. 258.

²⁸ L. Co. Hist. Soc., Vol. 32, p. 148.

²⁹ *Ibid*, Vol. 31, p. 31.

³⁰ *Ibid*, Vol. 32, p. 150.

³¹ *Ibid*, Vol. 33, p. 66.

³² Ellis and Evans, p. 373.

and Irish; there are some few good houses, and exclusive of those it appears neither handsome nor agreeable; however the markets are plentifully supplied with all sorts of provisions, and the cyder is very excellent, the nearest to English of any I met with in America.

"Most of the houses before the door have an elevation, to which you ascend by steps from the street, resembling a small balcony with benches on both sides, where the inhabitants sit and enjoy the fresh air, and view the people passing; most of them have stoves similar to those of the Canadians."³³ (December, 1778.)

In 1778 Francis Bailey printed a newspaper in Lancaster.

BRITISH PRISONERS IN LANCASTER

In 1781 there was cause for alarm, for there was impounded in the local barracks over 1400 prisoners of war, besides 600 women and children; this in a town with a population little more than twice that number. The burgesses desired to be rid of so many prisoners "for the health of the inhabitants, the security of the town, and the rights of humanity."

The chief reason for concern was the spread of typhus or jail fever among the many prisoners held here. William A. Atlee, Commissary of Prisoners, wrote to the Hon. Joseph Reed, President of the Supreme Executive Council, laying before him the appalling facts of the situation. From the copy of the original letter (in the archives of the Lancaster County Historical Society) we take the following lines:

". . . . Before the arrival of the Convention Troops [prisoners], there were near 800 Prisoners of War at this Post stationed at the Barracks within the Picquets, under my direction, and among them a great number sick of a putrid fever, which gave great uneasiness to the Inhabitants, as there was the greatest probability of its being communicated to the Town."

Continuing, Mr. Atlee reviewed the facts of the crowded condition of the place, and stated that the new arrivals were placed under the Guard then on duty, and that they "turned a number of them into the Barracks, but as they would not contain the whole (there being near 500 women and children among them) the married People were permitted to encamp on the common outside of the Stockade—where they still remain (except a few who have taken shelter in an old continental Stable³⁴) but badly sheltered from the weather."

The seriousness of the situation was attested to by a statement to the Chief Burgess, Paul Zantzinger, by one of the Barracks' physicians, Dr. John Houston, who later resided in Columbia.³⁵

³³ Worner, p. 45.

³⁴ This is one of the infrequent references to the Continental Stable. Part of the original structure (which had been converted into four dwellings) is now occupied by the Lancaster County Historical Society. The letter referred to is found in Steinman's annotated copy of Ellis and Evan's History, p. 60.

³⁵ Ellis and Evans, pp. 64, 590.

A German physician, Johann David Schoepf, late in 1783, visited this section. He states: "Lancaster, of all the inland towns in America, is the most considerable, numbering already 900 [?] houses. . . . No stream is nearby, which, giving an advantage in trade, might have contributed to the rapid growth of the town. . . . Not more than fifty English families live here, it is said; and thus the English is by no means the prevailing language, but it is the legalized language."³⁶

In June, 1784, Lancaster suffered the loss by fire of the courthouse in Penn Square. The second building was constructed in 1784-1787.

In 1786, by an actual enumeration, it was found that Lancaster had 678 houses. Probably there were 3000 inhabitants.

The year 1787 marked the printing of another newspaper, the *Lancaster Zeitung*, the third local paper established here since 1752. The year also marks the opening of Franklin College. William Reichenbach, Professor of Mathematics in the school and burgess in 1800-1802, designed the famous map of Lancaster and vicinity, showing an area ten miles square.

The Rev. Manasseh Cutler visited Lancaster in 1788 and took note of the old brick barracks, commissary's store, powder house, etc., as being "all out of repair." He further says, "Lancaster is a large and ancient town; the best built inland town in America. . . . Courthouse is not large, but the most elegant I have ever seen." He called East King Street "a very handsome street, with many brick houses, three stories and neat."³⁷

LANCASTER'S BID FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

The year 1789 stands out prominently in local events as the time when Chief Burgess Edward Hand was bold enough to suggest to Congress the desirability of Lancaster town as a site for the permanent location of the national capital. His letter to Congress, with the copies of William Reichenbach's map, explained in detail the many advantages of location, fertile fields, ample water supply, diversity of industries, the reasonable cost of commodities, the ability to entertain Congress; nothing was overlooked, not even the supply of fresh fish from the Susquehanna.³⁸ The population was given as 4200.

General Hand's estimate of the number of people was much too large. The first United States census in 1790 gave Lancaster 3373; but then Reading had only 2235, York 2079, and Harrisburg 875. So this largest inland city was holding its own, yet it had its critics. One correspondent in the *Lancaster Zeitung* of July 27, 1791, writing about the plans for a road to Philadelphia, "fears that if such steps are taken and the Lancaster people do not show more push than they usually display in new undertakings, the present generation will not derive much benefit from it." Nevertheless this turnpike was completed in 1794 at a cost of \$7,516 per mile.

³⁶ Worner, pp. 58, 59.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 79.

³⁸ For full accounts, see Riddle, p. 72, and L. Co. Hist. Soc., Vol. 2, p. 238.

In his Journal, Theophile Cazenove, an agent for the Holland Land Company, describes a journey through Eastern Pennsylvania in 1794, and has this to say of Lancaster:

"Stopped with Stake; pretty bad; I ought to have stopped with Mr. Slough, where one is very comfortable.

"The city of Lancaster is the largest inland city of the United States. . . There is a large town-hall and several very good brick houses, several smaller ones, also of brick, and a large number of log houses in the less conspicuous parts. About 900 houses and 6000 inhabitants, mainly mechanics—many taverns, several stores or shops; not paved or lighted, but good sidewalks. The city is situated on 2 hills, which are part of a very great number of hills, forming thus a very large and (comparatively) level land, surrounded on all sides by higher mountains. The Big Conestoga Creek is near the city, and always full of water, although it is too much intercepted by rocks to be navigable as far as the Susquehanna where this creek has its mouth.

"The broad and long main street and the shorter one which crosses it at the courthouse, the best quarter; the courthouse is newly and neatly built, but is in the middle of the square, which, to begin with, is not very large. The city plan is like Philadelphia's so far as the streets already built up are concerned.

"The house of General Ross is the most notable. The new German Lutheran church is very well built, of brick, and its steeple is the best built and the most elegant one in the United States. It is a pity that the immense statues of the 4 Evangelists are too small by half. The city surroundings are very pleasant. General Hand has his farm $\frac{1}{2}$ mile away on Conestoga Creek; its location is very country-like, the house good, and the family very polite. The families of Hubley (lawyer), Ketter (lawyer), Ross (senator), Sainseigher (merchant), are very obliging to strangers. . . .

"There are many Lancaster farmers who own as much as 10, 15, 20 thousand £, in land, and funds lent on mortgages on other lands. This does not keep them from coming with their long linen-trousers, and themselves driving a cart-load of wood to the Lancaster market."

William Priest, a musician, with his troupe, performed in Lancaster in 1794, and called it "a prettily situate town of about 900 houses. It is reckoned the largest inland town south of New England; and, indeed, the only large town without some kind of navigation." He was much impressed with the stories he heard of the accuracy of the Lancaster-made rifles.

Two years later, another traveler, Isaac Weld, Jr., makes practically the same observations about the town and the rifles as did William Priest. The town had "900 houses, built chiefly of brick and stone; together with six churches, a courthouse and gaol. . . . The Germans are some of the best farmers in the United States, and they seldom are to be found but where the land is particularly good; wherever they settle they build churches, and are wonderfully attentive to the duties of religion."

Another traveler, Duke De La Rochefoucault Liancourt, passed through Reading and Lancaster in 1795, and in his comparisons of the two towns gives Lancaster most favorable mention. He said, "Everything is much dearer in Lancaster than in Reading. Day laborers are paid four shillings per day, and are easily procured. The inhabitants are the same good-natured kind of people as at Reading, and equally laborious. . . . Though the number of houses does not encrease at Lancaster, yet the town gains much in outward appearance. The houses in general are larger than in Reading, and constructed either of brick or stone. Rent is much the same as in Reading. . . . The town itself is rather dull. It has more the appearance of a city than Reading; the houses stand nearer each other, and are more numerous; broad stone pavements run in front of the houses, and the streets that are not paved are at least covered with gravel, and kept clean. The sessions-house [courthouse] is a good building, neat and elegant. . . . Frequently from seventy to eighty wagons pass through Lancaster [to Philadelphia] in a day." ³⁹

Dr. Jedidiah Morse, father of the inventor of the telegraph, visited Lancaster in 1797, and described Lancaster as "a handsome and flourishing post-town, the capital of Lancaster County, and the largest inland town of the United States. It is pleasantly situated on the descent of a hill. . . . The trade is always great, and must increase in proportion as the surrounding country populates. It contains 700 or 800 houses and about 5000 (?) people." ⁴⁰

PETITION FOR A CITY CHARTER

By 1798 the progressive borough exhibited "growing pains" and sought "a place in the sun." A petition was presented to the State Legislature for a city charter, and set forth the reasons that impelled them to ask for a change in the form of their government. The old town-hall meetings were unwieldy and impracticable in discussions and decisions of moment for a community so large as Lancaster. They now wanted elective and representative officers to conduct the affairs of the town, and a mayor's court to try minor offences.

They stated "that the Borough of Lancaster has increased and still daily increases in extent and population, and ought to be able to provide for the order, safety and happiness of its citizens. But the administration of government therein, under its present charter, is inadequate to the advancement of public health and order, to the suppression of vice and immorality, and to the promotion of trade, industry, and happiness. Your petitioners, therefore, are desirous that the inhabitants thereof may be invested with more speedy, vigorous and effective powers of government, than are at present established." ⁴¹

Appended to the petition were the names of eighty-eight prominent inhabitants—a veritable "Who's Who" in the old town! The page glowed with the names of Huble, Hager, Slough, Zantzinger, Kuhn, Lauman, Eichholtz, Demuth, Reigart, Ross, Hoff, etc.

³⁹ Worner, p. 100 et seq.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 114.

⁴¹ L. Co. Hist. Soc., Vol. 34, p. 178.

Sad to state, the petition was denied or disregarded, and Lancaster waited for a score of years before attaining to the dignity of a city.

Pursch, the celebrated Swedish botanist, who visited the United States in 1799, says he found four botanical gardens in this country: Bartram's in Philadelphia; Woodlands, near that city; Dr. Hosack's at New York, and Christopher Marshall's in Lancaster.

The second United States Census, 1800, gave Lancaster Borough a population of 4292.

In 1802 according to Michaud, a Frenchman, "Lancaster is situated in a fertile and well-cultivated plain. The town is built upon a regular plan; the houses, elevated two stories, are all of brick; the two principal streets are paved as at Philadelphia. The population is from four to five thousand inhabitants, almost all of German origin, and various sects; each to his particular church. . . . The inhabitants are for the most part armourers, hatters, saddlers, and coopers; the armourers of Lancaster have been long esteemed for the manufacturing of rifle-barrelled guns, the only arms that are used by the inhabitants of the interior part of the country, and the Indian nations that border on the frontiers of the United States." 42

In the same year another commentator, Harm Jan Huidekoper, said: "The town of Lancaster is situated in a valley surrounded on three sides by higher ground than that on which the town stands, which does not add to its beauty, and the streets are ill-paved and very dirty. It owes the undesirability of its site to one of the Provincial Governors under the British regime, who, owning much property in this quarter, laid it out in town lots. According to one of the citizens who was my informant, the town has a population of about 9000. I cannot answer for the accuracy of this, and am tempted to suspect that, as men often think they add to their own importance by exaggerating the importance of their place of residence, the good man had done this. However, the size of the place rather astonished me, for I could not see what had attracted so many persons to a spot so utterly lacking in those natural advantages which in this country often cause very rapid growth in towns. From what I could gather, Lancaster has very little trade and the products of the interior only pass through it. The inhabitants are largely German, or descendants of Germans, as one sees at a glance, for the houses are built in the peculiar style common in Germany, half stone or brick, half wood." 43

James Foord, a New Englander, kept a journal of his travels to Kentucky in 1804. The notes in his diary pertaining to Lancaster appeared in the following form:

Thursday 12 Jany Tarried at Lancaster by reason of no Stage going forward my rout[e] viewed the village a tolerabl[e] handsome place about twice as large as Worcester in Massachusetts, one Bank of the branch

42 L. Co. Hist. Soc., Vol. 26, p. 90.

43 Ibid, Vol. 31, p. 143.

two houses of public Worship I saw a Court house the assembly in Session went to view them, have the appearance of decent Character a tolerable Speaker tho a small man and indifferent Clerk who has all the reading to do

no great oppertunity of hearing debates Pet[i]tions for Turnpikes, fisheries, and Pensions seem to be the order of the day.

Friday 13 Jany Bot a horse after some troubl[e] Started from Sleymakers in Lancaster at one o'clock afternoon for Pittsburgh. (From the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, January, 1940.)

Robert Sutcliff, an English traveler, passed through Lancaster in 1805, and stated that Lancaster was "considered the best inland town in North America." He further stated: "I found that considerable business was done in the manufactory of locks, and latches, and rifle guns, all of which are esteemed to be superior to whose imported from England."

Another Englishman, Thomas Ashe, in the same year, traveling across the state, stopped at "Lancaster, the county-town. The inhabitants are chiefly Dutch and Irish, or of Dutch and Irish extraction; they manufacture excellent rifle-guns and other hardware. The town is large, clean and well-built; but in spite of these attractions I quitted it the next morning by sun-rise."

The following lines are taken from a description of Lancaster as found in "Sketches of a Tour to the Western Country, etc.," by Fortescue Cuming, published in 1810. The tour commenced at Philadelphia in 1807.

"Lancaster is supposed to be the largest inland town in the United States. It is in a healthy and pleasant situation on the western slope of a hill, and consists of two principal streets, compactly built with brick and stone, and well-paved and lighted, crossing each other at right angles.

"There is a handsome, commodious courthouse of brick in the center, which in my opinion is injurious to the beauty of the town, by obstructing the vista of the principal streets. There are several other streets parallel to the principal ones, the whole containing about 800 houses.

"What in my opinion does most honor to the town, is its poor-house, which is delightfully situated on Conestoga Creek, about a mile from the town, on the right of the turnpike road towards Philadelphia.

"There are several private manufactories in Lancaster, among which are three breweries and three tan-yards, but it is principally noted for its rifles, muskets and pistols, the first of which are esteemed the best made in the U. S.

"The inhabitants are chiefly the descendants of the first German settlers, and are a quiet, orderly people. They are estimated at 4500.

"The manners and tastes of the inhabitants are not yet sufficiently refined by education or intercourse with strangers, to make it a desirable situation for the residence of a person who wishes to enjoy the 'Otium Cum Dignitate.'

"There is no theatre, no assemblies, no literary societies, nor any other public entertainment, except an itinerant exhibition of wax work, or a puppet

show, but there are taverns without number,⁴⁴ at some of which I have been informed private gambling is very customary. There are horse races here annually, which last a week on a course on the Commons to the westward of the town, which like most other races of this country, are for the mere purpose of jockeying horses and betting, and are not followed by balls and other social meetings of both sexes, as at amusements of the same kind in Europe."

The third United States census, 1810, shows the borough of Lancaster as having a population of 5408.

About the year 1811, the borough was excited by the destruction wrought by "fire bugs." The town had four fire companies, each with an engine, but there was a paucity of hose. The membership of these fire companies consisted mainly of the prominent citizens of the town, and the development of fire-fighting equipment kept pace with the growth of the town.

Until the year 1812 no property tax had been levied upon the inhabitants of Lancaster. Then the burgesses found that no longer could they successfully conduct the town's affairs on the proceeds of markets, fines and fairs. So a property tax was levied. You, who are prone to remonstrate at present-day taxation, can invoke "wishful thinking" for the good old borough days prior to 1812.

In 1817 Joshua Scott, noted draughtsman and surveyor, made a draft of the borough "from actual survey, four feet square, upon which should be designated streets, lanes, alleys, numbers of lots, and table or index of names of original grantees, date of deed, yearly ground-rent, etc.," and the same was placed in care of the town clerk. The burgesses also directed that "the ancient draughts of the Borough of Lancaster having lately been found, it is agreed that the same be likewise deposited in the office of the town clerk."⁴⁵ (George Weitzel was then town clerk.) These drafts, if located, would prove a valuable acquisition to the historical records of Lancaster.

This brings to a close the story of the borough days of Lancaster. On March 20, 1818, Lancaster, with a population of 6400, became a city, and John Passmore was selected as the first mayor. If the corporal dimensions of the mayor was indicative of the aspirations and ambitions of the new city councilmen, Lancaster promised at the start to do things in a big way—the first mayor was a man tipping the beam at 450 pounds. Today finds the little town grown into a municipality of 61,345 (census of 1940), which added to its immediate environs makes a community of 80,000 inhabitants. Indeed, Lancastrians can boast that they are citizens of "no mean city."

⁴⁴ Had Mr. Cuming prolonged his stay in Lancaster, he would have found the very things he thought were lacking, and in the taverns which he criticised theatrical performances of a high grade were given not infrequently.

⁴⁵ Ellis and Evans, p. 377.

POPULATION OF LANCASTER

YEAR	HOUSES	PEOPLE	YEAR	HOUSES	PEOPLE
1730	40-50	200	1784	650	2600
1734	175	700	1786	678	3000
1738	250	1000	1790	750	3373
1742	275	1100	1800		4292
1746	300	1200	1807		4800
1754	400	1600	1810		5405
1764	475	1900	1818		6400
1771	511	2044	1820		6663
1779	556	2224	1830		7704

FIRST OFFICERS OF THE BOROUGH OF LANCASTER

Burgesses:

Thomas Cookson, Chief Burgess

Sebastian Grooffe [Graaf]

Assistants:

Michael Byerly

Mathias Young

John Dehoffe

John Folkes

Abraham Johnson

Peter Worrall

Assistants for
advising,
aiding and
assisting
the said Burgesses
in the execution of the power
and authorities
herein given them.

Alexander Giblony, High-constable

George Sanderson, Town-clerk

to serve until the fifteenth Day of September
which will be in the Year of our Lord
One Thousand Seven Hundred and Forty-four,
and from thence until others shall be duly elected.

SOME STIPULATIONS IN THE ORIGINAL CHARTER OF THE TOWN OF LANCASTER

We do further grant [the power] to the Burgesses to have, hold and keep within the said borough two markets in each week, that is to say, one market on Wednesday, and one market on Saturday in every week of the year for ever in the lot of ground already agreed upon for that purpose and granted for that use by Andrew Hamilton, Esq., late of Philadelphia.

And also two fairs therein every year, the first to begin on the first day of June next ensuing, and to continue that day and the next day following; and the other of the said fairs to begin on the twenty-fifth day of October following, and to continue that day and the next day after. And when either of those days should happen to fall on Sunday, then the said fairs to be kept the next day or two days following together, with the free liberties, customs, profits and emolument, to the said markets and fairs belonging, and in any-wise appertaining, forever.

And we do further grant unto the said Burgesses, high Constable and assistants, and their successors, as much as in us is, That if any of the inhabitants of the said borough shall be hereafter elected to the office of Burgesses, high Constable or assistants, and having notice of his or their election, shall refuse to undertake and execute that office to which he is chosen, it shall and may be lawful for the Burgesses, high Constable and assistants then acting to impose such moderate fines on the person or persons so refusing as to them shall seem meet; so always that such fine imposed on a Burgess elect do not exceed ten pounds, and the Fine on the high Constable or an assistant elect do not exceed five pounds.

And it shall and may be lawful for the said burgesses, high constable and assistants for the time being to assemble *town meetings* as often as they shall find occasion; at which meetings they may make such ordinances and rules, not repugnant to, or inconsistent with the laws of the said province, as to the greatest part of the inhabitants shall seem necessary and convenient for the good government of the said Borough. And the same rules and orders to put in execution; and the same to revoke, and alter and make anew as occasion shall require. And also to impose such mulcts and americiaments upon breakers of the said ordinances as to the makers thereof shall be thought reasonable.