

The Bartons in Lancaster in 1776

From Mrs. Sarah Barton, to her niece, Miss Louisa DeNormandie, giving her an account of their reception at Lancaster on her first going there after her marriage to the Rev. Thomas Barton.

Lancaster 17th January 1776

My dear Louisa,

I make no doubt but you are anxious to hear of our safe arrival at Lancaster. Tho you have no idea of the difficulties we had to encounter, by reason of the bad roads — for my part I hope I shall never have occasion to traverse them again at this season of the year, We reached this place not before Thursday evening, very much bruised and fatigued, but after a comfortable dish of tea, and a good warming we were enabled to spend the evening with great cheerfulness in company with Mr. Zantzing¹ and Mr. and Mrs. Atlee² who came to welcome us as soon as they heard we were come. Tell your Aunt Campbell our good fortune did not forsake us even to the last — for on the road we had the agreeable account of Mrs. Zantzingers being safely delivered of a son³ six days before — I cannot omit mentioning the genteel and affectionate reception I met with from Mr. and Mrs. Zantzing¹ both at the time and on every occasion since, and if I can judge by appearances they are not only satisfied but happy in the choice Mr. Barton has made, which is absolutely necessary to confirm and make lasting my own — Mr. Zantzing¹ is really an extream genteel polite Man and something very engaging in him, I think strikingly so. As to Mrs. Zantzing¹ I shall be better able to speak of her hereafter as her situation at present will not

¹ Paul Zantzing¹, born January 12, 1744, was a prominent churchman, a prosperous merchant, a promoter of numerous enterprises, a loyal soldier, and a civic leader. Mr. Zantzing¹ married Esther, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Barton, on March 3, 1774. He was elected chief burgess more times than any other citizen. He died June 23, 1817, and was buried in Trinity Lutheran Churchyard. (See vol. 47, p. 113.)

² Hon. William Augustus Atlee, born July 1, 1735, died September 9, 1793. An ardent patriot, chairman of the Committee of Safety in the War of the Revolution, a warden of St. James' Church from 1762 until his death; a Justice of the first Supreme Court of this Commonwealth; chief burgess, 1770-1773. Interred in St. James' Cemetery. His home was probably located at Duke and Orange streets, northwest corner, opposite St. James' Church.

³ Her oldest son, Thomas Barton Zantzing¹, was born January 5, 1776.

admit of forming any Judge[ment?] of her person. Friday the day after we came was taken up in surveying of the house⁴ and every thing in it and unpacking my trunks and visiting my daughter — and if your Aunt was not perfectly satisfied with every thing she has seen and met with all around her she must be much altered from what she was — The great distance I am from you all who for so many years past have engaged my warmest affection and attention, is the only thing I have to regret, but this must be submitted to, and even with cheerfulness or I should ill deserve the happiness which seems to await me.

On Saturday Mr. Barton was visited by all the gentlemen of the town of every denomination both Jews and Gentiles & Sunday went to church and was highly delighted with the singing Nothing ever exceeded the treble an bass it is beyond any thing I ever heard of Vocal music.

Some of the Ladies have been to visit me and they would all have been if they could have got to me but the Lancaster streets are as little fit for walking as the roads are for riding at this season of the year — Remember me affectionately to Mrs. Campbell and all her family, Mr. Galloways also and all enquiring friends. I should be glad to hear how poor Mrs. White does. I received a letter 2 days ago from Mrs. Coxe with one enclosed for Mrs. Atlee — Sally would have wrote to you but I chose to do it therefore she leaves Betsys open for your perusal. Her sisters she sends open to your Aunt Campbell. We have taken this method that you may all know every thing concerning us — And as I have not time to write to your Aunt Richards, shall I beg you to do it for me or if you think proper you may enclose this. She must not be neglected by us for as to being forgot I am sure she never will be — Mr. Barton is writing to your Pappa otherwise I should have addressed him the first, both from inclination and gratitude — My love to your Pappa, I conclude with wishing you every happiness and believe me to be your affectionate Aunt

Sarah Barton⁵

*From Miss Sally Bard to her sister Mrs. Mary Bard, in
New York, upon the same subject*

My Dear Sister

As you are the first person I always think of you shall be the first I write to, my wishes for your happiness is so great that I naturally conclude you are anxious to hear of our safe arrival at Lancaster which I assure you was attended with much difficulty and some danger and had it not been for the care of an excellent Coachman who has made it his business to drive in those roads for these 20 years past I don't think we could ever have got here

⁴ Their home was located at Orange and Lime streets, southeast corner. On the northeast corner, the rector had his famous botanical garden. The Reverend Mr. Barton served the Lancaster congregation from 1759 to October, 1778.

⁵ Sarah Barton, the second wife of the Rev. Thomas Barton, was the former Mrs. Sarah DeNormandie, of New York City. These letters, here reproduced, were copied from a notebook in the possession of Mr. Howard R. Barton, 104 Wakefield Street, Hamden, Connecticut.

safe — We left Bristol on Monday and that night reached Philadelphia and so we rose the next morning an hour before day and stopped on the road no longer than was necessary, yet we could get no farther that day than 13 miles and many times Uncle Barton was obliged to get out and hold up the carriage to prevent its oversetting — Wednesday which was the day we were expected many of the Gentlemen came out to meet us, but it was Thursday evening before we got there when Mr. Zantzingler passed the evening with Mr. and Mrs. Atlee — In the night we were waked with a most delightful Serenade under the window consisting of two Violins one flute and a hautboy played extremely well, a Compliment to Mr. and Mrs. Barton, Saturday Mr. Barton was visited by all the Gentlemen of the place, its Customary here to send cards to all those you would wish to come and have an elegant Collation served up at twelve Clock with wine punch, &c — Yesterday Aunt made her appearance and today she receives her company, would you believe that our Church music at Lancaster exceeds any thing you ever heard, It is entirely Vocal and performed by Soldiers⁶ who have been used to sing in Cathedrals Their voices are really heavenly, so much melody I never heard before, when they begin to sing the whole congregation rise Uncle Barton has raised a subscription for them and they are to sing every Sunday — I am happier at Lancaster than I could have expected to be where I was an entire stranger. I thought when I was at Bristol my affection to Uncle Barton was very great, But it has increased daily since I have known him at home in his own house, you there see him the best of husbands the most affectionate Parent and the kindest master and I may add the tenderest relation For he has been truly that to me since I have been with him, But he never appears to greater advantage than in the Pulpit if I am any judge his sermons quite equal Dr. Smiths accompanied with a most agreeable delivery and then flowing from a good heart they must have a good effect upon his hearers; Mrs. Zantzingler his eldest daughter now lyes in with her first living child she is a pretty woman and appears very amicable she is thought much to resemble you The other five Children that are at home are all lovely and the most orderly I ever knew, you see them at no time in the parlour unless sent for, except Sunday when they dine with us. As soon as the weather moderates Uncle Barton is to take us to York and Dunkertown [Ephrata] and all round the country which will furnish matter for another letter — I expect I shall be laughed at by my Dear Brother for being so particular But if it afford you any, the least amusement I shall be Satisfied. And now let me enquire after my Dearest Susan How does she look and what does she say Can she remember her her own Aunt Sally at the distance of 260 miles? Does my sweet John begin to prattle but what I most earnestly wish to know above all the rest; do you keep your health and spirits? When shall I be made happy by hearing of a new relation. My brother is good enough to promise I shall often hear from him, I desire he will accept of my sincere and tender affection — I hope

⁶ Probably British prisoners who were interned in the Barracks at Duke and Walnut streets, northwest corner. Some were buried in St. James' graveyard; some were married by the Reverend Mr. Barton.

my Dear Uncle Bard and Aunt are well, present my kindest affections to them and Sukey I should be very glad of a letter from her, tell her to recollect that she is a letter in my debt

I am etc etc

Sarah Bard

From Mrs. Sarah Barton to her neice, Miss Louisa DeNormandie, giving an account of a visit to Caernarvon and Pequea

My dear Louisa

I have written several letters to Sally which I have no answers to except one by Mr. Saunderson I wanted an answer to that in Particular which inclosed the ballance of money due to Betsy and you which was directed by Mr. Wentz but went by Mr. Slough — I suppose before this reaches you Sally will be gone to Black point and as I am going to give you an account of my late Jaunt into the country with Mr. Barton on a visit to his congregations of Caernarven and Pequay⁷ — I must beg after you have perused it you would send it to Sally for when I write to one it is designed for all because my time will not permit me to address you severally. We were ten days absent & visited above an hundred families all of them rich substantial farmers — Caervarven is entirely settled with welch a set of people with whom I was very little acquainted and whose manners & customs where [sic] quite new to me. Their simplicity, sincerity & hospitality pleased me extreamly In this Congregation we were kindly entertained among the rest by a man of the name of Piersol⁸ [?] in the 102^d year of his age and his wife in the 75th they are both lively and active; And it was a most pleasing sight to me to see this venerable Briton running about with his staff in his hand with all the officiousness of youth to attend and make us welcome — Pequay is distant from Carnarvan [sic] about 8 miles & separated from it by a range of mountains called the Welch Mountains It is likewise a pleasant fertile valley settled by a kind opulant People descended from Ireland — The strong attachment and affection which these People shewed to My Dear Mr. Barton & the Church afforded me the highest satisfaction — I do not know how it will be possible for him ever to leave congregations so much devoted to him tho it will probably come to that at last. — I have likewise been to Susquehanna and conversed with the celebrated Susy Wright⁹ a maiden Lady above 70 years of age remarkably sensible & whose great reading and taste for several branches of Literature makes her company much coveted by all the great and Learned who

⁷ Caernarvon referred to Bangor Church at Churchtown, and Pequea to St. John's Church at Compass.

⁸ This is the great-great-grandfather of John Piersol McCaskey, beloved teacher and principal of the Lancaster Boys' High School for fifty years. John Piersol died November 8, 1777, aged 100 years. His wife, Alice, died 1789, aged 84 years.

⁹ Susan, daughter of John Wright, one of the founders of Columbia, Pa. All that Mrs. Barton has to say of Miss Wright is an accurate and fair appraisal of her character. Her biography in Ellis and Evans' *History of Lancaster County*, p. 584, seems to be drawn from just such a letter.

travel this way, at this advanced age she has all the vivacity of a woman of 40 the compleat exercise of all her faculties — converses freely & is an excellent companion — but what is more valuable she has a most humane & good heart and being favoured with a plentiful fortune she spends most of her time in her library which is large & well chosen, and in doing acts of Charity & benevolence — she maintains several poor familys on her own land & having considerable knowledge in Physics, dispenses medicines gratis to all the sick around her who are unable to employ a Physician — her situation on the banks of the Susquehanna is delightful but being educated a Quaker (tho her good sense will not suffer her to retain the stiffness and formalities of one) she is remarkably plain in her dress & manner of living.

Three miles below Susy Wright the Proprietaries [?] have retained a farm call'd blue rock which we also visited¹⁰ — Here the river is $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles [?] wide and every where discovers the most beautiful scenes nature can boast — The variety of Hill & Vale Forest and deer hind water and Island continually opening to the eye form the most pleasing Prospects — I performed these journeys on horseback near two hundred miles and crossed the Welch mountains which is above 2 miles over — So much for my travels [The letter breaks off here, and the rest of the page is blank]

¹⁰ The point visited was Blue Rock Ferry, below Washington Borough, and near to Indiantown, where the Rev. Thomas Barton was priviledged to cultivate a field belonging to the Proprietaries.

“Mr. [William] Barton hopes he will be allowed to take the crop [at Indiantown] in the Ground for the benefit of himself & the young Family his Father [Rev. Thomas Barton] has left behind, as it was put in before they had any notice of the sale by Mr. Penn, or the claim of the State, and Mr. [Charles] Hall the agent will, in the Course of a Day or two, go and take possession of the place for the State.” — *Pennsylvania Archives*, second series, vol. 13, p. 543.