

When Lancaster Was Pennsylvania's Capital

By GEORGE L. HEIGES

Philadelphia's Loss — Lancaster's Gain

The frame of government for William Penn's colony in the new world was published in 1681. At the same time the colony was fittingly named "PENNSYLVANIA" by King Charles II. In October, 1682, the founder, then thirty-eight years old, arrived in Pennsylvania and immediately set up headquarters and established residence on a site of 1280 acres where he proposed to rear a great city. In advance of the arrival of Penn, those acres had been plotted for that very city which was named PHILADELPHIA by Penn himself. Moreover, from the year 1681, Philadelphia was considered to be the capital of the province of Pennsylvania; and for many years thereafter, through changing conditions and even after William Penn's colony was no longer a province of Great Britain, the city of Philadelphia continued to be the seat of government as planned. In 1732 a dignified red brick State House was built on Chestnut Street in the capital city. Some years later the greatest single event in the history of the American colonies occurred in that same red brick building, for which reason it is generally known in our time as Independence Hall. Pennsylvanians, however, should ever remember that Independence Hall was the capitol building of the province of Pennsylvania from 1732 until 1775. From the latter year until November, 1799, it continued to serve as the capitol of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.¹

Agitation to remove the seat of government from Philadelphia began in 1795 and seemed to stem from three objections. There was fear that the local government of the large city of Philadelphia might become a dominating factor in state affairs. Because yellow fever raged in Philadelphia at certain seasons, it was deemed dangerous for the Legislature to meet. The city of Philadelphia was no longer centrally located, and it was oftentimes a hardship to get to the capital from the western end of the state.

¹ During the period that Philadelphia was in the hands of the British, Philadelphia ceased to be the seat of government. The Supreme Executive Council which was then the governing body of Pennsylvania (Constitution of 1776) fled Philadelphia and met in Lancaster from October 1, 1777 through June 20, 1778.

In February, 1795, the House of Representatives adopted a resolution in favor of removing the state capital to Carlisle. It failed of passage in the Senate. Again in 1796 the question was considered and the House passed a resolution in favor of removing the seat of government to Lancaster in preference to Carlisle and Reading, which towns were also considered. The citizens of Lancaster developed enough interest in the prospect of having the capital at Lancaster to the extent of assembling in a public meeting and drafting a letter, which was addressed to the members of the General Assembly from the County of Lancaster. It was published in the *Lancaster Journal* on January 29, 1796, and read in part, "We assure you that no pains will be spared or exertions wanting to provide for the accommodation of the Legislature and its attendant offices in the best possible manner." However, the Senate again did not concur with the House and the bill was therefore lost.

The next attempt to remove the capital came at the legislative session of 1798 when the House passed a resolution to take the seat of government to Wright's Ferry. The Senate amended the House bill by striking out Wright's Ferry and inserting Harrisburg. Neither the House nor the Senate would move from its position, so that bill was also lost.

When the Legislature met in 1799, once more the question of taking the capital away from Philadelphia was discussed. In the House, a committee was appointed to bring in a bill "To remove the seat of government to some central place." The choice seemed to be Wright's Ferry, but while the House hesitated in taking definite action the Senate came forward with its own bill which fixed Lancaster as the capital city. In due time the Senate bill reached the House where an attempt was made to amend the resolution by striking out Lancaster and inserting Harrisburg. That move was frustrated and by a vote of forty-four yeas to twenty-four nays in the House Lancaster was selected as the capital of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

April 4, 1799.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

I have this day approved and signed an act of The General Assembly entitled, "An act for the removal of the seat of government of the State of Pennsylvania," and I have directed the Secretary of the Commonwealth to return the same to the Senate where it originated.

Thomas Mifflin,
Governor.

The newspapers of the time had very little to say concerning the removal of the capital, and the inference could be that the citizens of Philadelphia felt no loss through the removal, and that the inhabitants of Lancaster felt no elation in the honor which was to come to their city. That there was some undercurrent of dissatisfaction in Philadelphia over the decision of the Assembly to move out of Pennsylvania's metropolis is at least evident in a little piece of sarcasm in William Duane's *Aurora*, on April 5, 1799.

"The governor has approved the bill for the removal of the seat of government to Lancaster. This removal has been effected by the City Mem-

bers, for such has been their intemperate party spirit, and such their disregard and overbearing deportment, that Philadelphia was rendered irksome to every independent representative. It is to be hoped that a monument will be erected to perpetuate the services and the fame of the present city representatives, for by their instrumentality, Philadelphia is no longer to be the seat of government."

Governor Thomas Mifflin who signed the act to remove the capitol was the first Governor of Pennsylvania to be elected under the Constitution of 1790. Until that year the title of the chief executive of the state government was *President of the supreme executive council*. Mifflin also was the last man to serve Pennsylvania in that capacity, having succeeded Benjamin Franklin at the time of his retirement in 1788. It was during his first term as President of the Council that Thomas Mifflin was requested to preside at the State Constitutional Convention of 1790, which convention framed a new constitution and established the office of Governor. In the state election which followed in 1791, Mifflin triumphed over the brilliant Arthur St. Clair.² He was reelected in 1793 and again in 1796. Even though Governor Mifflin's physical powers were on the wane three years later, he still might have been elected for a fourth term; for Mifflin was popular. However, the State Constitution limited the office of Governor to three terms of three years each, so that in 1799 Mifflin was definitely on the way out of the high office of Governor.

The political pot in Pennsylvania began boiling early that year. All through the state, discussion was rife concerning a successor to Thomas Mifflin, who had been chief executive of Pennsylvania since 1788. It was a foregone conclusion that there would be a hotly contested fight between the selected candidates of the two parties—the Federalists and the Republicans. The party of the founding fathers of the republic was the Federalist party, and it still was led by Washington, John Adams, Andrew Hamilton and John Jay. The Republican party was new and in its ranks were found those men who detested any signs of aristocracy; men who feared that monarchy might find its way into the structure of the government of the United States. The Republican party was the party of Thomas Jefferson and those who believed with him that the political salvation of the republic lay in the development of a true representative—or democratic—government. Referred to by some as the Democratic-Republican party, the name Republican in time was dropped and the party then took the name Democratic.

On March 1, 1799, the Democratic-Republican legislators and other interested citizens caucused to decide on a candidate for the office of Governor.

² Both Mifflin and St. Clair held the rank of Major-General in the Continental Army. Thomas Mifflin gained fame first as a eloquent orator. As Speaker of Congress in 1783 he replied to the farewell address of Washington. In 1785 he was Speaker of the State Assembly. Arthur St. Clair came to America as a lieutenant in the British Army under General Wolfe. He was appointed a Major-General in the Continental Army in 1777. From 1788 to 1802 he was governor of the Northwest Territory.

Alexander J. Dallas,³ then holding the portfolio of Secretary of the Commonwealth, apparently dominated the meeting, and he presented the name of Thomas McKean for the gubernatorial nomination. In the party were some men who were classed as radicals, and among them were Congressman Michael Leib and Editor William Duane, both of Philadelphia, to whom the name of McKean caused no enthusiasm. They doubted the genuineness of McKean's professed democracy and brought forward General Peter Muhlenberg as the candidate. However, Alexander Dallas, strong man of the party, won over the support of the radicals and the name of Thomas McKean of Philadelphia was given to the people of Pennsylvania as the Republican candidate for Governor.

Alexander J. Dallas had taken the lead in organizing the Jeffersonian group in Pennsylvania, and he and Thomas McKean, Chief Justice since 1777, had actually been holding the reins of the state government for some years under the declining physical ability of Governor Mifflin. McKean, while looked upon by some as being too austere and aristocratic in his bearing to be a true Jeffersonian, nevertheless had accumulated a great amount of prestige during forty years of public life in Pennsylvania; and Alexander Dallas knew that he needed such a man to head the Republican ticket and carry it to victory in the October election.

The Federalist party selected as its candidate for the place of Governor a popular individual from western Pennsylvania — James Ross — who had been a member of the Federal Convention of 1787 and was currently (since 1794) a United States Senator. All then was in readiness for the campaign preceding the election which would decide whether Thomas McKean or James Ross was to be inaugurated Governor of Pennsylvania at Lancaster in December of the year seventeen hundred ninety-nine.

It should be mentioned at this point that the placing of the capital at Lancaster was only a temporary arrangement, and that the responsibility of establishing a permanent capitol for Pennsylvania therefore devolved on future legislators.

The seat of government of this State has recently been removed to Lancaster, the greatest inland town in the United States, situated in a very rich, improved and populous country. It will before long, be permanently fixed at Columbia, Harrisburg or some other place on the river Susquehanna.

Daily Advertiser, Philadelphia, May 21, 1799.

The day from which Lancaster was to be considered as the State Capital was after the first Monday of November, 1799. Actual preparations for the removal from Philadelphia began in the spring of the year, for we may read in the *Philadelphia Gazette and General Advertiser* of May 23 that "arrangements are making in Lancaster for the accommodation of the State Legislature." Two weeks later (June 6, 1799) the *Lancaster Journal* announced that "The different Public Offices of this State are now opened in Lancaster."

³ Alexander J. Dallas was Secretary of the Commonwealth through the three terms of Governor Mifflin.

Thomas McKean Elected Governor

The week following the removal of the state offices to Lancaster saw the beginning of the gubernatorial campaign. It began mildly enough with polite letters in the newspapers, setting forth the virtues of the two candidates, but as time went on, the communications became exceedingly defamatory, especially with respect to the character of Thomas McKean, who had accumulated enemies as well as friends during his years as a public servant. The nature of the attacks upon McKean were very picayune and personal, and undoubtedly developed because of McKean's austerity and tactlessness.

Thomas McKean is the man above all others that can secure to us that dignity, which as a state we are entitled to in the General Union. He is the man who stepped forward in the hazardous period of 1776—the period when our struggle for independence commenced. He has ever continued the warm champion of his country's cause, and his acceptance of the office of judge when scarcely any other man would venture to accept it, must additionally endear him to us.

(Signed) Agricola
— From the *Lancaster Journal*
June 22, 1799.

Deeply interested in the approaching election of Governor, the event of which involves almost all that is valuable to Freemen, we deem it our duty to solicit your cooperation in the promotion of James Ross of Pittsburg to that important and responsible station.

Those who wish to preserve the happiness and independence of their country will not hesitate to give their suffrage in favor of a man whom even his enemies find no cause to reproach; a man of mild temper, plain manners and easy access, who united with the spirit of early life, the sound judgement of mature age, who has not betrayed the portion of confidence you have already reposed in him, and has afforded no reason to fear that in his hands, the original spirit of American Liberty will be adulterated by the new and dangerous tenets that divide or defolate the greatest portion of Europe.

(Signed) Ross Committee
— From the *Lancaster Journal*
June 22, 1799.

Pennsylvania's newspaper editors were primed to contribute by their writings to the excitement of the campaign, and from June until the fall election, readers were regaled by column after column of political chatter, much of it harsh and virulent. It was from the newspaper offices in Philadelphia and Lancaster that the bitterest writing emanated, and since certain of the authors seemed destined to be in the public eye during all the years that Lancaster was the capital, they should be identified now.

The two most forceful editors in Philadelphia were William Duane and William Cobbett. Duane's paper was the *Aurora*, founded by Benjamin Franklin Bache, grandson of Benjamin Franklin. Cobbett was owner and editor of *Porcupine's Gazette* and used the pen name of Peter Porcupine.

Although McKean had not been his personal choice as candidate for the office of Governor, William Duane, active in the affairs of the new Democratic-Republican party, was compelled by necessity to speak well of their

candidate, Thomas McKean. "A true friend of the people" was McKean according to Duane. He charged that Cobbett and the "anti-Republican" party were conspiring to destroy republican government in the United States.

On the other hand, William Cobbett described Thomas McKean as "a vile old wretch, and threatened to leave Pennsylvania if McKean was elected. "I will never live six months under his sovereign sway. As soon as he is safe in his saddle, I shall begin to look for a horse." Cobbett's paper, *Porcupine Gazette* had a life of only four years (1796-1800), but during that period had the largest circulation of any Philadelphia paper of the period.⁴

In Lancaster in 1799, two newspapers were being published. They were *The Intelligencer* and *The Journal* and each edited by a man who, judged by the product of his pen, was a sworn enemy of the other. *The Intelligencer* had made its appearance in Lancaster in July, 1799, under the ownership of Robert and William Dickson, with the latter of the brother team as the editor. The policy of the sheet was definitely anti-Federalist and strongly in favor of Thomas McKean for Governor.

The Lancaster Journal was edited by William Hamilton who had come to Lancaster in 1794 from Philadelphia where he had learned the printing trade in the office of Benjamin Franklin Bache. Taking over the ownership of the *Journal* in 1796, Hamilton at that time favored Jeffersonian principles and espoused the cause of Thomas Jefferson for the Presidency, but by the year 1799 had cast aside Jefferson and linked up with the Federalist party, when quite naturally, the *Journal* became the Lancaster organ of that party.

The state chairman of the Ross committee and the Federalist campaign of 1799 was Lancaster's esteemed citizen, General Edward Hand. The remaining state-wide members of the committee were Levi Hollingsworth, Samuel Morris, Robert Wharton, Benjamin R. Morgan, Henry Pratt, Michael Keppele, Zachariah Poulson, Jr., Daniel Smith, Philip Wager, William Sheaff, Godfrey Haga, John Wall, Lawrence Seckel.

The state committee of the McKean forces was Peter Muhlenberg, Samuel Miles, Tench Coxe, Michael Leib, A. J. Dallas, Wm. Penrose. The recognized Lancaster County leader of the party of McKean was Leonard Eichholtz,⁵ innkeeper, owner of the "Bull's Head."

The campaign was carried on in the newspapers, with the candidates making few appearances at meetings. Circulars also were used freely, and both of the parties through these media kept the campaign lively up to the very end. Toward the close there appeared a boxed paragraph in the *Lancaster Journal* which was definitely calculated to draw votes away from

⁴ William Cobbett, alias Peter Porcupine, wrote in his paper in January, 1800, "Agreeably to my notification made by advertisement, I now address to you the final number of Porcupine's Gazette. Remembering as you will, my solemn declaration to quit Pennsylvania, in case my old Democratic Judge, Mac Kean should be elected Governor. . . . there are I trust very few of you who will be surprised that I am no longer in that degraded and degrading state."

⁵ Leonard Eichholtz was the father of the famous Lancaster artist, Jacob Eichholtz.

McKean; and sure enough when the votes were counted, McKean had lost Lancaster County.

NORTHUMBERLAND SEPT. 28.

I DO CERTIFY THAT WHEN HON. THOMAS MCKEAN, ESQ., WAS AT SUNBURY LAST MAY, I HEARD HIM SAY AT HENRY GETTIG'S TAVERN IN SUNBURY THAT THE ASSEMBLY OF THIS STATE HAD ACTED UNWISELY IN REMOVING THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT TO LANCASTER, AND THAT HE HOPED THE GOOD SENSE OF THE NEXT ASSEMBLY WOULD INDUCE THEM TO REMOVE IT BACK AGAIN TO PHILADELPHIA. THIS IS A FACT WHICH I AM CALLED UPON TO MAKE KNOWN TO THE GOOD PEOPLE OF NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, AND WHICH I AM WILLING TO ATTEST ON OATH IF NECESSARY.

CHARLES HALL.

Tangible evidence that the campaign had excited the interest of the electorate was seen in the number of votes cast on election day. More than twice as many men as voted in the gubernatorial election in 1796 went to the polls on election day in seventeen hundred ninety-nine. A communication in the *Lancaster Journal* urging exercise of the privilege of suffrage may have helped in some degree to bring out the vote in Lancaster County.

Let no business—let no kind of weather prevent your attendance on the day of election. Let not a man remain at home. Let even those whose hairs have grown grey with the rays of time and the fatigues of life make one more manly struggle. Let them reflect that by such conduct, they may leave a legacy to their posterity, more valuable than the treasure of Golconda or Peru; and the children of future generations may list their praises in the heart-cheering numbers of Liberty, Virtue and Happiness.

—Americanus

Lancaster Journal Oct 2, 1799.

The election was held on October 8, and when the tabulation was finally completed and the result published, it was found that Thomas McKean had polled 38,036 votes and James Ross had 32,641 votes to his credit. The vote in Lancaster County was 3,285 for Ross and 2,258 for McKean.

"A number of Republicans of the Borough of Lancaster, having subscribed toward an entertainment on the happy event of our late election, joined by a number of their Brethren from the county, the entertainment was accordingly provided in front of Mr. Boyd's house on Thursday the 7th instant. The fare—780 pounds of best beef, two Shoats 142 pounds; two Roasters 35 pounds, 4 hams 63 pounds, 125 Lancaster loaves of bread. . . . The provision being cooked in the best manner, it was placed on a table 300 feet long, at half-past one. Emanuel Carpenter was President, Vice-Presidents William Barton and William Slaymaker. There were seated at the table four hundred and twelve Republicans, and a great number remained standing; a corps of Republican militia firing at every toast, of which twenty-one were drunk. Later there was a procession and the borough was illuminated."

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*
November 13, 1799.

The victory of the Democratic party was celebrated in an appropriate manner throughout the state. In Lancaster city, the party adherents assem-

bled in front of Mr. Boyd's house on November 7 and stowed away a prodigious amount of food. On the fifteenth of the month, Democrats in the southern end of the county met at John Downing's in Colerain Township and by way of celebration enjoyed the succulency of "a fatted Ox, roasted in full shape."

"A respectable number of Republicans met at John Downing's in Colerain Township on the Bank of Octoraro on Friday the 15th inst. in order to celebrate the election of Thomas McKean to the important trust of Governor of this Commonwealth. They had an entertainment on this occasion, consisting of a fatted Ox, roasted in full shape with every other apparatus necessary to render the whole complete. James Downing was Chairman, Robert Cowden was Secretary."

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*
November 20, 1799

Lancaster Officially Becomes the State Capital

It may be remembered that Lancaster was to be considered the State Capital from the first Monday in November, seventeen hundred ninety-nine. Looking forward to this, some of the principal state offices had been removed to Lancaster during the preceding summer; and by November all of the offices had been set up, awaiting only the arrival of Governor Thomas Mifflin and the members of the Legislature to consummate the establishment of Lancaster as the capital of Pennsylvania. "Thus, after one hundred and seventeen years, Philadelphia ceased to be the capital city of the State, about the same time when, by removal of the Federal Government, it ceased to be the capital of the Union."⁶

There is very little in the official records of Lancaster Borough and of Lancaster County which is of help in writing the story of the removal of the capital from Philadelphia. We know that the three men who were appointed commissioners to superintend the removal of the State's effects to Lancaster were Lancaster County men — Jacob Strickler, Thomas Boude and Matthias Barton;⁷ and from extant documents in the State archives, we have further learned the names of the men who actually hauled the State's belongings to Lancaster in order that the business of the state could be carried on. Possibly all of the persons who did this work were Lancaster Countians. One paper bears this heading, "1799 April to Jan 1800 An Account of money expended by Jacob Strickler one of the Commissioners appointed to remove the Books, Papers, etc., belonging to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania from Philadelphia to the Borough of Lancaster as follows."

⁶ From Scharff and Westcott's "History of Philadelphia." Washington, D. C., became the capital of the nation in 1800. See also "Andrew Ellicott, Surveyor of the Capital of Our Nation" by M. Luther Heisey, L. C. H. S., Vol. 54, page 1.

⁷ Jacob Strickler was a member of the State Assembly, 1797-1800. Thomas Boude, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, lived at Columbia, served as a State Assemblyman and as Congressman. Matthias Barton, one of the sons of the Rev. Thomas Barton, was a State Senator, 1796-1800.

Continuing, one may read of expenses paid to these: Susanna Edwards, Frederick Stump, Matthias Slough, Adam Weber, Matthias Barton, William Hensel, George Baumgard, William Kirkpatrick, Jacob Strickler. The following were paid for hauling: Jacob Eversole, John Forry, John Newcomer, Daniel Wolf, Frantz Herr, John Kendig, Henry Hershberger, Adam Nesor, Henry P. Deck, Arthur Thomas, George Getz, Martin Bitzer, Jacob Guth, Peter Baughman, Christian Herschey, Felix Binkley, Jacob Binkley, Jacob Weidman. The total expense of removing the State books and paraphernalia to Lancaster amounted to \$3710.13.⁸

The person who supervised the disposition of the possessions of the State as they were unloaded at Lancaster was Paul Zantzinger; and in his own hand one may read the bill which he made out to the State, which is the evidence of his part in the big moving.

"At the request of the Commissioners for removing the offices of this State to the Borough of Lancaster, to receive, unload, store up all the Boxes, Trunks, containing the Publick Papers together with the chairs, tables, Desks, carpeting and stoves, and which commission I performed with care and attention for nearly two weeks, \$135.00."

The next matter of interest to consider in connection with the removal of the capital to Lancaster is the location in that borough of the various state offices. Commonwealth records refer to the use of Lancaster County buildings when the capital was moved, which means that the County had more than one public building and that more than one such building was used. Apart from the jail, Lancaster County actually possessed two other public buildings in 1799.

A bronze tablet on Lancaster's old city hall on the northwest corner of West King Street and Center Square informs the passerby that from 1799 until 1812 the building was the capitol of Pennsylvania. This seems to indicate that the Governor and other officers of the State government had offices therein. It was only in 1795 that this building, designed as "the public office House" and as a depository for records was built by the Lancaster County Commissioners, and it is very probable that the Governors of Pennsylvania had offices here during the years 1799-1812. To give credence to this, we have the following from the pen of the late Judge Charles I. Landis: "This building, during the period that Lancaster was the capital of the state, was known as the State House, and is so designated on an old draft made when the market houses, which preceded our present Central Market, were built."⁹ Unfortunately, there are no records in the county commissioner's office which tell whether the Governor actually had his office in the county public office house.

Lancaster Borough apparently was given one room in the building, and this no doubt was sufficient in size for the transaction of all the civic business of the town, which according to the census of 1800 had a population

⁸ From the final report of the Commissioners in the State Archives.

⁹ See "City Hall and Its History," by Judge Charles I. Landis, L. C. H. S., Vol. 22, No. 7.

of 4292. In fact, the Burgesses of the town rented "their room in the publick building" to Samuel Bryan, Auditor General of the State for 15 pounds a year.¹⁰ This is the only real evidence that we have of any state official having an office in the county office building. State records do indicate that rooms for some state officials were rented from Lancaster citizens.

From a study of all available material it appears to this writer that the one and only public building existing in Lancaster in 1799 which today may be labelled as the State House or the Capitol of Pennsylvania was the old Court House which at that time stood in the middle of Center Square. This was Lancaster County's second Court House and was completed in 1787. We read in Mombert's history of the county concerning this Court House that "it was sufficient in size and conveniences, not only to accommodate the County Court and the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth, but was for many years the Capitol of Pennsylvania, and the sessions of the legislature were held therein from 1799 to 1812." In the History of Lancaster County, edited by Ellis and Evans, we may also read that "the old court house of 1787 became known as the State House . . . and the appellation clung to it during the remainder of its existence." There is no doubt therefore that it was in Lancaster County's Court House that the State Assembly met.

The incumbents of the principal State portfolios when the capital was moved to Lancaster in 1799 were:

Secretary of the Commonwealth.....	Alexander J. Dallas
Auditor General.....	Samuel Bryan
State Treasurer.....	Peter Baynton
Attorney General.....	Jared Ingersoll
Adjutant General.....	Nathaniel Lufborough
Master of the Rolls.....	Matthew Irwin
Receiver General.....	Francis Johnson

Of this group, the two men who were outstanding and destined to figure in State and National affairs for some years were Alexander Dallas and Jared Ingersoll. As Secretary of the Commonwealth since 1790, Dallas had become an acknowledged political power and was the one most responsible for the elevation of Judge McKean to the gubernatorial office. Jared Ingersoll had been a member of the famous Continental Congress and also one of the framers of the Federal Constitution along with Governor Mifflin.

The happenings at Lancaster on the days immediately preceding the convening of the State Assembly can best be told by items from the newspapers of those days.

On Thursday last, Mr. Dallas, the Secretary of the Commonwealth, arrived at the Seat of Government. On Saturday Morning, he returned to Philadelphia, his place of residence.

— *Lancaster Journal*
November 13, 1799

¹⁰ From The Minute Book of the Burgesses, of Lancaster Borough, now in the archives at the Municipal Building, Lancaster.



Lancaster's Courthouse in Penn Square 1787-1852

The Legislature of this State will meet at Lancaster on the first Tuesday of December.

— *Lancaster Journal*
November 27, 1799

Pennsylvania Legislature. Yesterday in the Senate Twenty-one members met. After reading over the returns, they adjourned till this day.

Thirty-eight members of the House of Representatives attended. Forty members being necessary to form a quorum, no business could be done. Adjourned till 10 o'clock this day.

— *Lancaster Journal*
December 4, 1799

On Monday last arrived here, Thomas Mifflin, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He was met at Mr. Witmer's Bridge by a number of gentlemen of the Legislature and of the Borough, from whence after partaking of an excellent dinner, he was escorted into town. The Governor has been much indisposed but we are happy to find he is rapidly on the recovery.

— *Lancaster Journal*
December 4, 1799

This day a number of gentlemen, sufficient to form a quorum, met. The returns of the election for Representatives throughout the State of Pennsylvania were read.

The House then proceeded to the choice of a speaker. The votes stood as follows

For Isaac Weaver.....	37
For Jonas Preston.....	32

Majority for Isaac Weaver.... 5

Judge Yeates attending for the purpose, administered the requisite affirmation to the Speaker. The members present also took and subscribed the oaths of affirmation prescribed by the Constitution of this Commonwealth, Art. 3 and the Act of the United States passed the first of January 1789.

— *Lancaster Journal*
December 4, 1799

Many petitions from printers were presented, praying to be appointed printers of the journals of the House, both in the English language and the German language.

Elected Joseph Bullock, Esq.....	Clerk
James Martin.....	Sergeant-at-Arms
Joseph Fry.....	Doorkeeper

Mr. Matlack¹¹ the Clerk of the Senate, being introduced, informed the House, that the Senate had appointed a Committee to unite with one from the House of Representatives to wait upon the Governor and inform him that the Legislature were organized and ready to review any communication he might have to make.

— *Lancaster Journal*
Dec. 5, 1799

The Senate voted unanimously to have William Hamilton print the Bills and Journals of the Senate in English, and Albright and Lahn in the German language.

— *Lancaster Journal*
Dec. 6, 1799

¹¹ See "Col. Timothy Matlack" by Bertha Cochran Landis, L. C. H. S., Vol. 42, No. 6.

The House Resolved that a list of the names of the Members of the House and their places of residence be made out by the Clerk, and that 100 copies of the said list be printed for their use.¹²

— *Lancaster Journal*
December 6, 1799

The Committee appointed to wait on the Governor reported that he would meet both Houses of the Legislature on Saturday next at Twelve o'clock to make his communication.

— *Lancaster Journal*
December 7, 1799

The Lancaster County Court House in which the Pennsylvania Legislature of 1799 convened undoubtedly was an impressive building in appearance, and standing as it did in Center Square, it was clearly visible from any point in each of the four principal streets of the borough. "It was a two-storied structure having four faces and four gables, facing respectively towards North Queen, East King, South Queen, and West King streets, that facing southward being then considered its main front. The building was of brick, but its eight corners were laid up of blocks of cut stone, and the lintels and the window sills were of the same material. From the center of the shingled roof rose a steeple or cupola, in which hung the bell, and on this the hours were struck by the hammer of the Eberman clock, which had four dials, facing north, south, east and west, like the gables of the building."¹³

The entire first floor was apparently entirely occupied by the Court Room, with the Judge's bench taking up the north side of the room. For this reason, the door on the north side of the Court House was never used. The building had doors on each of its four sides, but the west door was used only when a great crowd was in attendance. Inside the eastern entrance was built a circular stairway which permitted access to the second floor, which was divided into three rooms, the largest of which was used for holding District and Orphans' Court. It was the doorway on the south side of the Court House which was therefore considered to be the principal entrance.

From Ellis and Evans' "History of Lancaster County" we read of one addition made to the building in order to accommodate the two houses of the Legislature. "When Lancaster was made the State capital, an inclosed wooden stairway, leading to the second story, was built outside the south wall of the court-house, and remained there for many years. It was probably put up for the greater convenience of the senators, who deliberated in the upper room, and who did not wish to enter the lower room, where the House held its sessions."

Further evidence of the minor work that had to be done to get the Lancaster Court House ready for the Legislature is found in two small sheets of paper carefully preserved in the State Library. They are receipted bills in the handwriting of certain mechanics to whom money was paid by the

¹² This list was printed in Vol. 28, page 6, L. C. H. S. See "Lodgings of Assemblymen in 1799" by H. Frank Eshleman.

¹³ From History of Lancaster County, edited by Franklin Ellis and Samuel Evans, 1883.

Commonwealth. One is headed "Dec. 23, 1799, State of Pennsylvania to Wm. Hensel for Sundry Carpenter Work." The total of his labors amounted to £7 15s 10d and included these items:

	£	s	d
For Making a table for the Assembly.....	0	10	0
For Making shelf under Speaker's Desk.....	0	7	0
For Making a Table for the Sergeant at Arms.....	0	3	9

The other bill was from Nathaniel Hantsch for putting up stoves and chimneys.

Turning Lancaster County's public building into the State House was no small matter and must have entailed a great deal of shifting of county courts and offices, and in fact eventually caused the County to hold Court in the Masonic room on West King Street. Information on this matter will come later in the story; but suffice it to state now this very interesting fact, that the County Commissioners of Lancaster County gave "the public Buildings of the County of Lancaster . . . without any expectation of Receiving Rent."

On December 7, 1799, Governor Thomas Mifflin, then in his fifty-fifth year, appeared before the joint houses of the State Assembly in the State House at Lancaster and delivered the customary opening address to the Senators and Representatives. This address in printed form was the one and only State paper issued by Governor Mifflin from Lancaster, and in it he made no mention of the removal of the capital. Mifflin's mind was on other things. Even though a grateful constituency had elected him to the Legislature, he was a ruined man, physically and financially. Governor Mifflin's Lancaster address was indeed a farewell address. In closing, he spoke these words:

"And now, my friends and Fellow Citizens, I bid you from this this station, a last and affectionate farewell. I acknowledge, with heartfelt gratitude, the public kindness, confidence and support which I have uninterruptedly enjoyed for the greater portion of an active and anxious life. I shall forever reflect, with pride and pleasure, upon the candor and liberality, which I have experienced in my intercourse with the successive Legislatures that have convened during the constitutional period of my administration. As a proof of my sense of such obligations, I have endeavoured to execute an arduous office with diligence and fidelity. And while, surrendering the task to an able and upright successor, I implore for you, for him, and for my country, the guidance and blessing of an all-wise and all powerful Providence."

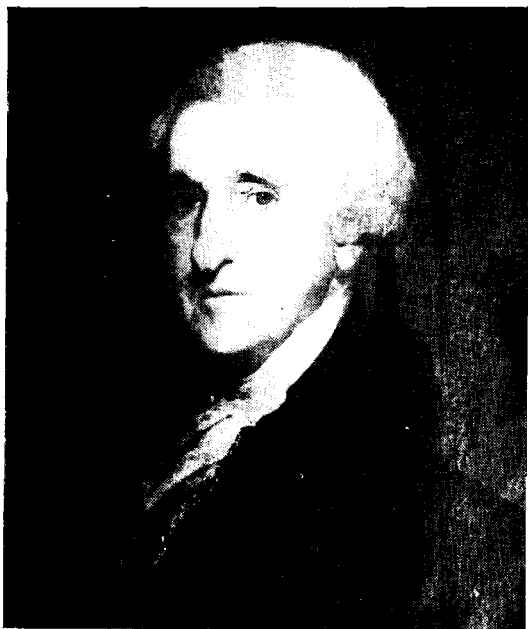
Both the House and Senate duly responded to the address of Governor Mifflin; and in the answer from the House, we may read these kind words:

"In the address which you delivered at the opening of the present session, the House of Representatives recognize an additional proof of your vigilance, fidelity and discernment in executing the duties of an arduous office. . . . Though surrendering the Executive Office to an able and upright successor, your public services must

be gratefully remembered by your fellow-citizens; and we earnestly pray that the remainder of a life so active and patriotic may be peaceful and happy."

Thomas McKean Takes Oath as Governor

Inasmuch as Thomas McKean¹⁴ was soon to take his place as the first citizen in the life of Lancaster, this seems the place to briefly describe him. From all accounts, McKean's presence was most commanding. One chronicler



THOMAS MCKEAN
Governor of Pennsylvania
1799-1808

Portrait painted by
James R. Lambkin, limner.

Photo by Penna. State Dept. of
Commerce, Harrisburg, Pa.

of the day wrote that the two most impressive men in all the city of Philadelphia were Thomas McKean and his son-in-law, The Chevalier de Yrugo. David Paul Brown left us this picture of him. "He was tall and stately —

¹⁴ Thomas McKean was born 1734 in New London Township, Chester County. He was a member from Delaware of the Continental Congress 1775-1783, and while serving in this capacity also presided as Chief Justice of Pennsylvania 1777-1779. In 1781 he was elected President of Continental Congress and it was he who received Col. Tilghman, messenger from Washington with the news of the British surrender at Yorktown. McKean was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

over six feet in height, and even in later years, notwithstanding his great age, an erect person. He usually wore a cocked hat, carried a gold-headed cane; and walked even to the close of his life, though with a somewhat tottered step, with great apparent dignity and pride." As Chief Justice, Thomas McKean "on the bench sat with his cocked hat on, and wore a scarlet robe."¹⁵

Whereas information has been received that the Governor-elect will arrive in the Borough of Lancaster on Thursday next.

Resolved that the Republican citizens of Pennsylvania residents in the Borough of Lancaster and the neighbourhood, be invited to assemble at Witmer's Bridge, at 12 o'clock to-morrow, to escort the Governor-elect thence to his Lodgings in this Borough.

Resolved, that the Republicans will, on this interesting occasion, wear branches of Laurel in their hats.

Resolved, That a Committee be appointed to invite the Republicans to the proposed meeting, to arrange a Procession and to notify the Governor-elect of the time and place at which the escort will attend.

Resolved that the following citizens compose the Committee of Arrangements; Daniel Franck, William Barton, William Michael, Timothy Matlack, Leonard Eicholtz, William Bausman, Francis Bailey, Samuel Humes, John Ross, Michael Gross, Peter Reed.

— *Lancaster Intelligencer*
December 11, 1799

The Republican Blues of Lancaster are requested to parade to-morrow morning, at eight o'clock at the home of Mr. Peter Gonter, in complete uniform.

By order of the captain
John Eberman, Sec.

— *Lancaster Intelligencer*
December 11, 1799

"Resolved, that a committee be appointed on the part of the Senate to attend the Governor-elect on Tuesday next at his residence in the borough of Lancaster and accompany him from thence to the members of the Legislature assembled in the Chamber of the House of Representatives, and

Ordered that Mr. Findley, Mr. Say and Mr. Mewherter be a committee for the said purpose."

— *Journal of the Senate*
December 11, 1799

On Thursday last, arrived at this place, Thomas McKean, Esq. Governor-elect of the State of Pennsylvania. He was escorted from Philadelphia by a party of volunteer cavalry, was met at Witmer's bridge by some of the officers of the militia and a great number of other citizens, and conducted to his lodgings, at the house of Mr. Matlack.

The bells were rung on the occasion, and the air was rent with SWEET HUZZAHS from STENTOR LUNGS.

— *Lancaster Journal*
December 14, 1799

¹⁵ From "The Forum" by David Paul Brown.

On December 16, 1799, McKean vacated the office of Chief Justice, to be succeeded by Edward Shippen; and by this date, McKean was already settled in Lancaster awaiting the day of the 17th, when he would be sworn in as Governor of the Commonwealth. His approach to Lancaster as well as his actual arrival were chronicled as follows:

On Thursday last, Thomas McKean, Governor-elect, escorted by two detachments of Volunteer Cavalry, one from Captain Leiper's Cavalry of Philadelphia, the other from Captain Bernhard's of Delaware County, arrived in this town. They were met at Witmer's Bridge by a number of officers of the Militia, by the Volunteer Company of Republican Blues and by a very respectable number of gentlemen of the Borough, and neighbourhood. From the Bridge, they proceeded in regular procession to the lodgings of the Governor-elect; whence after giving three cheers, they dispersed in that orderly and decent manner which on every occasion, designates the conduct of true Republicans.

— *Lancaster Intelligencer*
December 18, 1799

In making preparations for the inauguration of Thomas McKean there was one little matter which seems to have been neglected; and that was making arrangements with a duly qualified official to administer the oath of office to Mr. McKean. From a receipted bill in the State Library the interesting fact is brought to light, that on the day before the appointed time for the induction of Mr. McKean, it was found necessary to send a man on horseback posthaste to the home of Judge John Whitehill in Salisbury Township and request his presence in Lancaster on the following day. A native of Lancaster County, Judge Whitehill lived out his life on his native heath, and served as Associate Judge of Lancaster County from 1791 to 1803, in which year he was elected to Congress. The man who rode the eighteen-mile, more or less, express to Salisbury and return on December 16, 1799, was one John Kline, who for this service rendered to the State of Pennsylvania made out the curious bill reproduced below.

	Lancaster Dec 16, 1799		
Dr. to the State of Pennsylvania			
to John Kline			
For riding express to Judge Whitehills to request			
his attendance to administer the oath of office to			
the Governor-Elect	1	2	6
Expense incurred on road		7	7½
		<hr/>	
equal to		\$4.01½	
1800 January 15th Received of James Trimble			
four dollars one cent in full for above account. ¹⁶			

Concerning the actual ceremonies incident to the inauguration of Thomas

¹⁶ This was a period of transition in coinage. "Nov. 1, 1800 dates the practical end among the merchants of Philadelphia of the British or colonial method of computation by pounds, shillings and pence." Scharff and Westcott.

McKean as Governor of the Commonwealth, we have only a few meagre newspaper items and a letter from the Governor to his wife to give us all that we know about the great event.

Yesterday, Thomas McKean, Esq., was proclaimed Governor of the State of Pennsylvania. After taking the oath of office, in presence of the General Assembly, he delivered the following concise address.

"Gentlemen of the Senate and Gentlemen of the House of Representatives
"To the obligations of honor, gratitude, and interest, I have now added the pledge of a solemn oath, for the faithful performance of the trust which my fellow citizens have reposed in me. I am sensible of the difficulty, as well as of the importance, of the task that I have undertaken: but regarding the happiness and prosperity of our constituents as my sole object; pursuing the constitutions and laws of our country, as my constant guide; and confiding in the countenance and cooperation of the Legislature, I will not resist the hope of success, which prompts and animates me on the occasion.

"Under this impression, Gentlemen, permit me to bespeak a continuance of that harmony which happily subsisted between the Legislature and Executive departments during the administration of my patriotic predecessor. The present crisis in human affairs, evidently demands the exercise of wisdom, moderation and fortitude, from all who are employed in the business of government. Let us then, according to the province and the capacity allotted to us, cordially unite in exercising those attributes for supporting the government of the Union, for asserting the rights of the state, for encouraging virtue, knowledge and industry, and for preserving social order, confidence and concord, so that our public labours may be justly crowned with the applause of our constituents, and the blessings of Heaven."

— *Lancaster Journal*

December 18, 1799

At 4 o'clock P. M. the present and late governor, a number of the Legislature of the State, former members of Congress, and a very large and respectable assemblage of citizens, partook of an elegant Dinner, provided for the occasion at the house of Leonard Eicholtz. The Speaker of the House of Representatives presided at the entertainment, The Governor was seated on his right hand, and Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg was Vice President. . . . After the company had retired and the Governor had returned to his lodgings, a great number of citizens paraded through the principal streets of the Borough with lights in their hands, attended by a band of musicians and bearing three lanthorns with transparent labels significant of the occasion. They saluted the Governor with three cheers and also some of the most distinguished Republican characters in a manner which did equal to themselves as those they saluted. As they passed and repassed the Governor's lodgings he appeared and returned their salute."

— *Lancaster Intelligencer*

December 17, 1799

The extant letters which Governor McKean wrote to members of his family and others during the years of his incumbency in the gubernatorial office are preserved among the McKean papers which are now in the files of the Pennsylvania Historical Society. From a careful reading of the letters, the conclusion has been reached that Mrs. McKean did not spend much time in Lancaster during the years that her famous husband was Governor.

According to Thomas McKean Thompson, who was a nephew of Governor McKean, the latter "kept house" in Lancaster for the first year that he was Governor but "Governor McKean's family continued to reside in Philadelphia during his administration."

In the first letter which Governor McKean penned to his wife, he told her briefly of his first day as Governor.

Lancaster, December 20, 1799.

Dear Sarah,

I have scarce time to tell you I am well, and expect to be in Philadelphia on Monday next at twelve o'clock. The two houses of the Legislature purpose to adjourn this day until the 26th instant, which unexpectedly will enable me to make you a short visit. You may mention this to any one who may enquire after me, and my letters for me which may come to hand after this may be detained until I shall arrive.

I took the usual oaths on Tuesday the seventeenth, and afterwards partook of a splendid dinner with more than a hundred Republicans. In the evening a great concourse of citizens paraded the streets with lighted torches, a band of music saluted me with loud huzzas. Everything else must be reserved until I see you.

My love to the Chevalier Youngo, Sally and Sophia and a kiss to dear little Charles. My devoirs to all my friends.

Adieu

Your affectionate
Tho. McKean

The Death of George Washington

Governor McKean's first official communication turned out to be a funeral notice, for on December 19 it fell to his lot to issue from Lancaster the official announcement of the death of a great man with whom he had intimate and friendly contacts through thrilling Revolutionary times: the incomparable George Washington, who more than any other personifies for us the beginning of this nation. Strange indeed seems the fact that in the letter written to his wife on December 20, McKean made no mention of the passing of this great fellow American.

George Washington breathed his last on the fourteenth, and the news reached Lancaster on the eighteenth. At once the Governor prepared a message to the Legislature, which was even then about to adjourn for the Christmas holiday. *The Lancaster Journal* of December 21, which issue had all columns divided by heavy black lines stated, "Yesterday the Governor sent to both houses of the Legislature the following elegantly pathetic communication."

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Gentlemen

The intelligence has just been received that George Washington, the early, the tried, approved, honored and beloved patriot of America, has paid the debt of nature; he died at Mount Vernon in Virginia on the 14th of this present month.

The record of his virtues and his services is so faithfully impressed on your hearts, it is so important to the honor of human nature, and the glory of his country, that, I am sensible, it cannot be strengthened by contempo-

aneous praise, nor be impaired by the operations of time. Yet, the glowing sense, which I personally cherish of his worth, the veneration which his character commands throughout the world and the public benefit of presenting such an example conspicuously to the imitation of the rising generation impel me to call your attention to the awful and melancholy event.

While, then, we avoid, in the common affairs of our government, every appearance of servility and adulation, inconsistent with the independence of Freemen, let us, in the respect which we pay to the singular merits of this great man, rescue republics from the proverbial stigma of ingratitude.

You, Gentlemen, can devise a proper testimony of the public feelings and sorrow upon the present occasion; and assuring you of my concurrence, I will venture likewise, to answer for the cordial approbation of our constituents.

THOMAS MCKEAN

Lancaster Dec 19, 1799

The above message was read to the Legislature on the twentieth of December, the day of adjournment; and on that same day a resolution was presented in the Senate which provided "That in testimony of our gratitude and in respect to the memory of a character so deserving, in all situations, whether as a Soldier, a Statesman, or a Man, the members of this House will wear a black crepe on the left arm during the present session." A committee consisting of Mr. Maclay and Mr. Dale was appointed to inform the Governor "respecting the wearing of crepe on the arm . . . as a testimony of respect to the memory of George Washington."

The Legislature returned to Lancaster on December 26. On January 4, Mr. Ewing, chairman of a committee appointed to consider the Governor's message of December 19, reported in the Senate a resolution which provided "That the Governor be and he is hereby authorized to purchase two full-length portraits of the late General Washington . . . ; and when the same shall be so executed and the whole finished, that he cause one of the aforesaid portraits to be placed in the most convenient and conspicuous place in the Chamber of the House of Representatives, and the other in the Chamber of the Senate." In such manner did the State Assembly of Pennsylvania aim to honor the great Washington.

The town of Lancaster, befitting its rank as a capital city put forth special efforts, too, in arranging a notable memorial ceremony. Lancaster's beloved physician, Dr. Edward Hand, once a General on Washington's staff, headed the committee of arrangement; for it was he who ordered the Volunteer Cavalry "to parade completely equipped at the Court House on Tuesday the seventh day of January at 10 o'clock A. M." It was General Hand as well who sent to the Senate this invitation to take part in the procession in honor of Washington, which invitation was promptly and unanimously accepted.

The Honorable the Speaker of the Senate

The Speaker and members of the Senate of Pennsylvania are respectfully invited to attend a funeral procession which is to take place to-morrow at twelve o'clock, in honor of the late illustrious commander in chief of the army of the United States.

By order of the Committee of Arrangement

EDWARD HAND

Lancaster, January 6, 1800

Over the signature of General Hand, we read also in the *Lancaster Journal* of December 27, that "The Governor, The Speakers and the members of both branches of the Legislature, the heads of Departments, the Judiciary . . . are respectfully invited to attend on this solemn occasion."

The program of January seventh, which included a procession followed by a service in the "Episcopal English Church," was carried through in a dignified and solemn manner, although the proceedings were slightly marred by one unfortunate incident. The procession was due to move at twelve o'clock noon, but when that hour arrived, Governor McKean had not appeared to take his place. A messenger was sent at once to his lodgings with a request for his presence; but the Governor saw fit to remain where he was, thus forcing the funeral procession to move without him.

The Intelligencer on the following day stated that the committee of arrangement had sent a request to attend to both houses of the Legislature "but omitted to send a similar invitation to the Governor who is a qualified branch of the Legislative powers under the constitution."

The Lancaster Journal explained the Governor's absence in this way. "In consequence of the invitation in the newspapers having been made common to all, no particular information or request had been communicated to the Governor till the procession was about to form. He, not appearing at that time, Col. Mosher was appointed to wait on him. The Governor thought there had been a want of attention and respect on the part of the committee and refused to attend." ¹⁷

Governor McKean Punishes His Enemies

The charges and counter charges which were hurled from both sides during the state political campaign of 1799 might easily have been forgotten if Thomas McKean had chosen to take the lead in drawing a curtain over the dead past. McKean however was not such a man. Even after his election and before he was inducted into office, he was still speaking out against his political enemies, labeling them Traitors — British agents — Tories. No sooner had his term as Governor begun than office holders who had supported the Federalist ticket were discharged from their jobs. Most of them were minor county officers, who at the time were gubernatorial appointees. As an example, announcement was made on January eighth that Governor McKean appointed Wm. Barton Prothonotary of Lancaster County in place of John Hubley, Charles Hartley, Prothonotary of York County in place of John Edie and Tench Coxe, Secretary of The Land Office in Lancaster in place of Nathan Lufborough.

These appointments in particular prompted the writing of a letter to the *Lancaster Journal*, which letter criticized the Governor for removals of seemingly worthy office holders.

¹⁷ See "Washington's First Visit to Lancaster and the Observance of his Death," by William F. Worner, L. C. H. S., Vol. 26, page 209.

I shall only briefly observe that at least seven of the gentlemen who have been removed, were all zealously active in attaining the independence of American liberty.

It is almost needless here to remark that every one of the displaced gentlemen were opposed to the election of Mr. McKean.

Could he not find men more worthy than William Barton, Tench Coxe, or Charles W. Hartley?

Where was Billy Barton at the commencement of the Revolution?

Where was Tench Coxe when Lord Howe entered Philadelphia?

(Signed) REPUBLICANUS 18

The many removals from offices could not even be ignored by the Legislature; and to this day we may discern the unfavorable light in which McKean placed himself at the beginning of his term of office as we read the answer which the Senate prepared to send to his inaugural message of December eighteenth.¹⁹

Mr. Gurney, from the committee appointed to prepare and report an answer to the Governor's Address, made report, and the same was read, as follows, to wit.

To THOMAS MCKEAN, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Sir,

The sentiments you announce, and the motives which you profess in relation to the high and responsible trust committed to your administration, are such as have afforded satisfaction, and claimed the respect of the Senate of Pennsylvania.

With principles thus correct, and views thus laudable, we had a momentary hope that a correspondent conduct would have followed; and that by a manly and noble policy, the spirit of party and political discontent which now divided our State and threatens its peace, would have been removed, and tranquility again restored. Under these impressions, and with dispositions to relinquish personal considerations when the public good required, we were willing to forgive, and if possible to forget the language used by you in your answers to sundry addresses on your election to the chief magistracy—You there bestow on those who opposed your election the most approbrious epithets, and ascribe to them the most wicked designs—We sincerely lament that the same spirit which dictated these answers has marked your official conduct—A great number of respectable characters have been removed from office, against whom no other blame rests, than the exercise of their rights as freemen, in opposition to your wishes; amongst these are a number of the most meritorious officers and soldiers engaged in the establishment of our independence—They were selected by your patriotic predecessor as deserving their country's favor and gratitude—The small rewards bestowed have, for the exercise of a right which their lives were risked to secure, been by a single breath, destroyed.

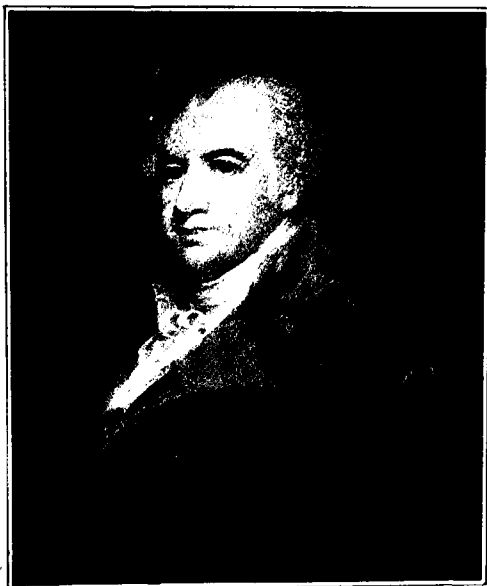
Affecting as these considerations are, the operation which a system of this kind must have on the principles of our Republican Government, has produced still greater concern—Our Constitution secures the right of

¹⁸ William (Billy) Barton, son of the Rev. Thomas Barton was in England during the Revolutionary War. Tench Coxe, native of Philadelphia, was accused of being a Tory and in fact guided the British forces from the head of Elk River to Philadelphia, and when the British forces entered the city, Coxe was by the side of General Howe.

¹⁹ The House approved the Governor's message and returned to him a friendly response.

suffrage; and it will be to no purpose that our Laws are framed to guard against undue influence in our elections, if fear on the one hand, or the hope of reward on the other, be suffered to govern in the exercise of this right — If opposition to a successful candidate be considered a sufficient ground for the removal of an officer, and zeal in his favor regarded as the chief qualification in a successor, there is much reason to believe that this reason exists.

Whilst our oaths, our honor and our interests impose on us the sacred duty of co-operating in all measures tending to the interests and happiness of our constituents, they also impel us to bear this public testimony of our disapprobation of a measure which, in its consequences, will be destructive and ruinous to republican principles.



THOMAS MIFFLIN
Governor of Pennsylvania
1788-1799

The above answer was read for the first time in the Senate on Monday, January thirteenth, 1800. After the second reading on Monday, January twenty-seventh, Senator Maclay²⁰ proposed some substitute paragraphs which would have softened the tone of the answer; but the Senators voted fifteen to seven against the amendments. Whereupon, they proceeded to vote paragraph by paragraph to send the answer as originally drafted by the committee.

Governor McKean's position in the first month of his incumbency assuredly was not pleasant, especially since his own actions had brought on much of the censure directed his way. On the other hand he must have

²⁰ Samuel Maclay was a veteran of the Revolutionary War. In 1802 he was elected to the U. S. Senate.

been hounded at every turn for jobs by his Republican followers; for most of the State officeholders were Federalists. Even the great Thomas Jefferson found time to write to McKean in the interest of an office seeker, "Mr. John Beckley informs me he has proposed himself to your notice in the disposal of offices in this State. . . . My putting pen to paper on the subject is only because he has set some value on my evidence." Closing the same letter, Jefferson wrote, "With great sincere respect for you personally and my constant prayers for calm seas and temperate breezes on the voyage to which you are committed, I am Dear Sir, Your friend and humble servant, Th. Jefferson."

While it is true that Governor McKean rewarded certain of his faithful Republican followers with jobs, there must certainly have been many applications and letters which were filed and maybe forgotten in the pigeon holes of a new desk which the Governor acquired about this time, as witnessed by the following:

Lancaster Jan. 16, 1800
State of Pennsylvania to
E. Humphreyville
For making a Writing Desk and
Case of Pigeon Holes for the Governor
and finding all the materials.

£7 14 0

Ex-Governor Mifflin Dies in Lancaster

Writing to his wife on January 19, Thomas McKean told of visiting his predecessor, Thomas Mifflin, now a very ill man.

Lancaster, Sunday night
19th of Jan, 1800

Dear Sally

. . . The British party here seem determined to do everything they dare, and they are desperate, to render me uneasy; and I am determined to retaliate and treat them with deserved contempt.

A majority of the House of Representatives are Republican and of course my friends. A majority of the Senators are otherwise or at least tools of those who are so, and of course my enemies.

General Mifflin is very ill. I have called several times at his lodgings and seen him; he was taken out of bed on Tuesday last to the House of Representatives to vote for Treasurer. Michael Keppele and Alexander Scott, with difficulty supported him in going and returning; but he has not risen since, nor do I believe he ever will. I saw him to-day and staid above an hour with him, he was delirious, totally debilitated and in my opinion can not survive two days.

My duty is great, but my health and Spirits good and I flatter myself that after a week more I shall have as much leisure at least as when Chief Justice. . . .

Governor McKean judged the physical condition of General Mifflin aright, for on the day after McKean penned the above letter, General Mifflin, then in his 57th year, passed from time into eternity.²¹

²¹ Governor Mifflin died at the lodging house of John Bausman on Queen Street, where he had taken a room when he came to Lancaster.

On January 20, "Doctor Logan informed the House that his colleague, the late patriotic Governor, Thomas Mifflin, had expired at 15 minutes past 3 o'clock a. m. and requested the House to make arrangements which would show to their fellow citizens that they were sensible of the common loss, which the State had sustained by the death of this great and good man."

Mr. Bullock clerk of the House of Representatives, presented an extract from the Journal of that house, and the same was read as follows, to wit.

In the House of Representatives Monday, January 20, 1800

This house deeply lamenting the death of Major General Thomas Mifflin, one of its members and late Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and conceiving it to be due to his memory that such order should be taken thereon, as shall manifest their sense of his numerous and important public services.

Therefore

Resolved, That the remains of the late General Mifflin be interred at the sole expense of this Commonwealth, that the Legislature will attend the funeral, that the Governor with the officers of the Executive department, the judges and officers of the Judiciary department, and such other public and private persons as shall appear proper to a committee to be appointed to conduct the interment, shall be invited to attend the same.

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to join a committee of the Senate (if the Senate shall appoint such committee) to carry into effect the foregoing resolution — and

Ordered, That Mr. Eyre, Mr. Linnard, Mr. Penrose, Mr. Ingels and Mr. Logan be a committee for said purpose.

On Motion, Resolved, That a committee be appointed to join the committee of the House of Representatives for the purpose of carrying into effect the resolution of the two Houses of the General Assembly respecting the interment of Major General Mifflin — and

Ordered, That Mr. Gurney, Mr. Findley and Mr. Jones be a committee for the said purpose.

— Journal of State Senate
Monday, January 20, 1800.

Mr. Gurney from the committee appointed to join the committee of the House of Representatives to carry into effect the resolution of the two Houses of the General Assembly, respecting the interment of Major General Thomas Mifflin, made report, and the same having been read.

On motion of Mr. Gurney, seconded by Mr. Jones,

And by special order the said report was read the second time, considered by paragraph, and agreed to unanimously as follows, to wit.

Resolved that to carry into effect the intention of the Legislature, the remains of the late Major General Mifflin shall be interred at twelve o'clock on Wednesday next, in the burying ground of the German Lutheran Church in the borough of Lancaster, and that the Governor be requested to cause to be erected at or near the place of interment, a marble tablet, or monument with a suitable inscription in commemoration of the patriotism, and the public services of the deceased.

Resolved, That the following order of procession be observed at the funeral.

1. Peace Officers,
2. The Sextons of the various religious denominations,
3. The Ministers of the various religious denominations,

4. The Body, with six Pall Bearers, three members of the Senate and three of the House of Representatives,

5. The Members of the County of Philadelphia, and the Senators from the district comprised of the City and County of Philadelphia, and the County of Delaware, as mourners,

6. The Officers of the House of Representatives,

7. The Speaker and members of the House of Representatives,

8. The Officers of the Senate,

9. The Speaker and members of the Senate,

10. The Governor and Secretary of the Commonwealth,

11. The Civil Officers of the State,

12. Civil Officers of the United States,

13. The Magistrates and Corporation of the borough of Lancaster,

14. Officers of the Militia,

15. Officers of the Navy,

16. The Citizens.

Resolved, That a joint committee of the two Houses of the General Assembly be appointed to direct and superintend the funeral ceremonies.

— Journal of the State Senate

Tuesday, January twenty-first, 1800.

On January 22, 1800, the mortal remains of General Thomas Mifflin,²² recent Governor of the Commonwealth were interred in the narrow yard between the pavement and the west wall of Trinity Lutheran Church on South Duke Street. Fixed in the church wall is the tablet authorized by the General Assembly, "In perpetuation of the memory of Thomas Mifflin, Major General of the Revolutionary Army of the United States, and late Governor of the State of Pennsylvania. A distinguished Patriot and Zealous Friend of Liberty. Died January 19, 1800."²³

Died in this Borough on Monday last at about 3 o'clock A. M. in the 57th year of his age, Gen. Thomas Mifflin—a man who honorably waded through all the perils and dangers of the American Revolution, as a soldier—ably assisted in the first councils of the U. States—was 12 years Governor of Pennsylvania—and at the time of his death a member of the State Legislature.

— *Lancaster Journal*

Jan. 22, 1800.

General Mifflin . . . Much we revere Thee and much we respect Thee for Thou hast done much to deserve highly of Thy country. . . . We saw thee uniformly active with thy compatriot Washington through those times which tried men's souls.

— *Lancaster Intelligencer*

Jan. 22, 1800.

²² See "Thomas Mifflin," by Martha J. Mifflin, L. C. H. S., Vol. 3, page 173.

²³ In 1937 there was placed close to Mifflin's grave by the State of Pennsylvania a second tablet which memorializes him as one of the framers of the Constitution of the United States.

Governor McKean Replies

On January 28, Governor McKean dispatched a reply to the communication from the Senate relative to his inaugural message. That the Governor was deeply wounded by the sharp letter is apparent in the opening sentence of his own extremely well-written letter. "The extraordinary nature of your first communication to me, as an executive magistrate, the slight reference that it contains to the address which it pretends to answer, and the distant period at which it is presented, are indications of premeditated insult, that affect me infinitely more on account of the apparent departure from the dignity of a Legislative body, than on account of the injustice done to my political principles, or the outrage offered to my personal feelings." The letter went on to remind them that "the constitution has conferred on the Governor the exclusive power of appointing or removing officers" and that the House of Representatives honored him by approving the same address which the Senate denounced. In closing, he assured them that "notwithstanding every past unpleasant occurrence," he would "embrace every opportunity to manifest a profound respect of the Legislature, and to reciprocate marks of confidence and esteem with the individuals who composed it." Thus ended Governor McKean's first bout with an unfriendly Senate.

Lancaster Rifles for The Pennsylvania Militia

Among the papers and memoranda in the State Library relating to the years when Lancaster was the capital are several items which give us some additional information concerning Lancaster riflemakers in 1799 and 1800. The following letter was written to Quartermaster General Clement Biddle of Philadelphia by Col. Jeremiah Mosher²⁴ of Lancaster, who had been appointed by Governor Mifflin to prove and inspect the arms made at Lancaster, York and Strasburg.

Lancaster
Dec. 30, 1799.

To Clement Biddle

Of the arms manufactured by John Graeff and Abraham Henry at Lancaster, there are stored and ready for delivery seven hundred and forty two stand. In a short time, they expect to have two hundred more ready for delivery.

Of those manufactured by Jacob Leather at Yorktown, there are stored and ready for delivery five hundred and nineteen stand.

I have been twice to Strasburg at the manufactory of Fundersmith. I find he has not a single musket ready and only five barrels on hand. He has, I believe, about 200 locks.

Jeremiah Mosher.

²⁴ Jeremiah Mosher, a native New Englander was a Revolutionary War soldier who was hospitalized in Lancaster. Here he married Susan Thorbrugh and lived the remainder of his life, becoming prominent in church and civic circles. See "Who Was Who in Lancaster One Hundred Years Ago," by Mrs. James D. Landis, L. C. H. S., Vol. 48, page 93.

On February, 12, 1800, Governor McKean appointed Peter Getz of Lancaster in place of Col. Mosher to inspect arms manufactured by Henry and Graeff of Lancaster, Jacob Lather and Conrad Welshans of York, and John Fondersmith of Strasburg.

From a report of Quartermaster General Biddle on January 1, 1800, it is learned that Graeff and Henry were under contract to make 2000 guns for the state. For a musket and bayonet, the state paid these Lancaster riflemakers, thirteen and one-half (13½) dollars each.

Accomplishments of the Legislature

The first State Assembly which was held at Lancaster convened on December 3, 1799, and adjourned on March 17, 1800. During the session of more than three months, Governor McKean signed three acts of the Legislature which brought into being these ten counties of Pennsylvania: Adams, Center, Beaver, Armstrong, Butler, Crawford, Erie, Mercer, Venango and Warren.

Two questions which were before the Legislature and were discussed, but which did not mature, were "abolition of slavery" and "public schools." Nevertheless, it shows that Pennsylvania was even then thinking of advanced social legislation and education for the masses. In the matter of slavery, some free blacks from Philadelphia presented a petition urging complete emancipation of slaves in this Commonwealth; and after discussion, there was committed into the hands of a special committee for study "An act to complete the abolition of slavery in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania." On March 11, they reported "it as their opinion that the said bill be specially referred to the consideration of the next Legislature."

Concerning public schools, Governor Mifflin in his valedictory said to the legislators, "And permit me to remind you, that another constitutional injunction, the establishment of public schools for the gratuitous instruction of the poor, still remains inoperative and unexecuted." Later, Dr. Logan brought this to the notice of the House and introduced a bill "for the general establishment of schools within this Commonwealth."

On the day of adjournment, Governor McKean signed the bill which authorized him "to appoint commissioners to sell the house in Philadelphia intended for the accommodation of the President of the United States." On that day, too, Mr. Kean from the Committee of Accounts reported the amounts due the Speaker and Members of the Senate for their pay and mileage. Members were paid three dollars a day, while the Speaker received four dollars a day. They were allowed 10c a mile going to and returning from Lancaster.

Following the adjournment of the Assembly, Governor McKean departed for his home in Philadelphia, and did not return to Lancaster until June.

Happenings in Lancaster—Spring and Summer 1800

"Matthew Irwin, Master of the Rolls, died in Lancaster March 28 at the age of 59 and was interred in the burial ground of the Presbyterian

Church. He evinced from the commencement of the American Revolution, a firm adherence to the Principle of Liberty, on which that Revolution was founded."

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*
April 2, 1800

"Timothy Matlack, Secretary of the Senate was appointed Master of the Rolls in the place of Matthew Irwin, Deceased."

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*
April 23, 1800

"On Monday last, his Excellency the Governor, accompanied by Mr. Dallas, Secretary of the Commonwealth, arrived in this Borough."

—*Lancaster Journal*
June 14, 1800

"Mr. Hamilton:

It is now about 2 months since either the Governor of Pennsylvania, or the Secretary of the Commonwealth have been at their Posts at the Seat of Government. During that period the most shameful delays have been made in the Public Offices. Land business that could have been formerly transacted in two days or at the most three days, of late has occupied from 15 to 18 days. I have been one of the sufferers by this scandalous neglect of duty. I voted for Mr. McKean, under the idea that he would discharge the duties of his office with punctuality and fidelity—and that he would make judicious arrangements in the Public Offices. But in these things as well as in others, Mr. McKean has deceived me. . . . I cannot see the propriety of paying a Governor 5300 dollars a year and his secretary 2000 a year while they are rolling their carriages about the streets of Philadelphia, more than 60 miles from the Seat of Government—and while they are clogging the routine of public business."

A REAL REPUBLICAN
—*Lancaster Journal*
June 14, 1800

GOVERNOR THOMAS MCKEAN TO JOHN DICKINSON

Lancaster, June 23, 1800

. . . "Tho my situation in life is changed my cares remain. I have never had greater employment for body and mind than the last six months unless when I was President of Congress. I have waded thro a sea of trouble and surmounted my principle difficulties. I have been obliged tho no Hercules to cleanse the Augean stables with little or no aid, for I am my own minister and manuensis. In about a fortnight more I expect calm seas and gentle breezes, if the intrigues & corruption of the British rulers do not create a new agitation of the waves and winds. A Governor of Pennsylvania has more duties to perform than the President of the United States or any Governor in the Union; he has as much power and patronage as is necessary in a Republican government, but not an adequate compensation for a man worthy of the office. Many very inferior stations are better rewarded. Indeed two thousand pounds are not more now than half the sum ten years ago, and the mode of living is more expensive."

"H. E. Muhlenberg married in Lancaster on Thursday evening, June 26, 1800, George Sheaff, merchant of Philadelphia to the amiable and accomplished Miss Anne Catherine Muhlenberg, daughter of Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, Esq., Receiver General of the Commonwealth."

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*
June 26, 1800

Lancaster, July 9, 1800

Dear Sally,

"If the wheat has not been sold, rather than accept a dollar and a half a bushel, I would send it to Mr. Grey's mill on Schuylkill near Wm. Hamiltons Esquire, or send it to Sniders Mill & have it made into flour, reserving the shorts for the use of my horses.

"I am pretty well, but fatigued with business, importuned to death almost for offices and kept on a perpetual watch by infamous Tories in and out of the General Assembly, but have no doubt of soon surmounting all these difficulties." . . .

"The Republican Citizens of the Borough of Lancaster and its vicinity gave a public dinner on the fourth of July to the Governor of the Commonwealth at Hershey's Spring. . . . In the evening which was mild and refreshing the company marched with music to the Borough, carrying the cap of Liberty; and after paying their respect to the Governor, returned to the Bosoms of their families."

— *Lancaster Intelligencer*
July 9, 1800

"The Republican Citizens of the Borough of Lancaster and its vicinity, gave a public dinner on the Fourth of July to the Governor of the Commonwealth at Hershey's Spring. About two o'clock the company, consisting of about one hundred and thirty Persons partook of an excellent repast. 16 Toasts were drank on the occasion.

"Following this the Governor offered a toast "Prosperity to the County of Lancaster" . . . In the evening the company marched to town with music, Timothy Matlack, Esq., carrying a Red Cap, and after paying respect to the Governor, dispersed."

— *Lancaster Journal*
July 12, 1800

JAMES MONROE TO GOVERNOR MCKEAN

Richmond, July 12, 1800

Dear sir:

We have made a great improvement in the science of criminal justice as in that of government generally, in comparison with the existing state of things when the Revolution commenced. At that time the people took the government into their hands and have, I think, done more in the 24 years that have passed since, to improve the condition of mankind than kings and nobles had done before from the creation of the world. . . .

I have long known, respected and esteemed you not to have rejoiced at your appointment, nor to be anxious from private as well as public consideration for the success of your administration. . . .

It will at all times give me great pleasure to hear from you and obey your commands in any case where I can serve you. To your opinions on published subjects I shall pay the highest respect and shall therefore be happy to receive them when you think proper to communicate them.

The large and costly house on Ninth Street Philadelphia built for the use of the President was knocked off for the sum of \$24,000 dollars.

It is said the house cost the State \$180,000 dollars. The University of Pennsylvania was the buyer.

— *Lancaster Intelligencer*
July 23, 1800

LOST

The Governor and Secretary of Pennsylvania. They departed a considerable time ago from the Seat of Government, and have not been since heard of by the inhabitants of Lancaster. . . . A reward of three sharp shins will be given to any man who will bring them to justice at the Seat of Government.

N. B. If they do not return soon the command should be placed in the hands of the little Deputy Secretary, Jemmy Trimble. As Jemmy has to do almost all the business, he should have their salaries also.

— *Lancaster Journal*

August 23, 1800

Governor McKean Calls Special Session of The Assembly

With an election for President of the United States coming up in December of 1800, the Pennsylvania Assembly adjourned on March 17 without having made provision for the choosing of fifteen Presidential electors. Governor McKean knew therefore that it was his responsibility alone to summon the State Assembly for a special session if the Commonwealth was to have a part in choosing a President. It was on the 10th of October that the proclamation calling a special session for November 5 went out from Lancaster to the Prothonotaries of the counties of the state. The proclamation was dated October 18, and in an accompanying letter, Secretary Dallas admonished prothonotaries to withhold the proclamation until the 18th, so that in all counties, the members of the Assembly would learn of the summons on the same day. Further, on the 14th of October, four days before the date of the proclamation, the state-wide elections for State Senators and Representatives would be held.

Dallas wrote:

"With respect to the summons, you will ascertain as expeditiously as possible the names of The Members of the Senate and House of Representatives chosen for your County, at the next election, and address one summons to each of them, which you will cause to be delivered without delay wherever the members reside with a request that they will punctually repair to the Seat of Government on the day *specified*."

"As this business requires particular attention the Governor desires me to add, that he relies upon your care for accomplishing it in a regular and certain manner."

From a reading of the *Lancaster Journal* of October 18, 1800, it appears that the proclamation was not given to that staunch Federalist paper but was given to the Republican *Intelligencer*. An *extra* edition of the *Journal* was therefore issued on that day; and Editor Hamilton after paying tribute to "the snivelling partiality" of Thomas McKean, went on to tell his readers, "As the printer of a paper extensively supported by both parties, I am determined that no expense whatever shall be spared to give my readers intelligence so important."

The special session of the Pennsylvania legislature got under way on the 5th of November, and on the 7th, Governor McKean addressed a Legislature which had in it more Republicans than the previous one as the election of October 14th marked another defeat for the Federalists, although the

Senate remained in the hands of that party. McKean took pains to emphasize the necessity of choosing electors to vote Pennsylvania's choice for President. "For, a free and enlightened People will not long continue to maintain or to respect an institution, in which (from whatever cause) they have ceased to be represented," said McKean.

The Senate promptly criticized the Governor for not calling the Assembly earlier to provide for electors; but the Governor rightly pointed out to them the clear fact that they were to blame, not he. Said McKean in his rejoinder, "It will be observed that the Legislature has a power over its own adjournment; and had you, gentlemen, thought during the last session, that another meeting of the same General Assembly would probably furnish the means to reconcile the jarring opinions of the two Houses, a proposition for that purpose would, I am persuaded, have been introduced."

Indeed, it was a very discordant Assembly which set itself to the task of choosing electors; and not until December 2, after much political maneuvering, were fifteen men selected, of which eight were Republicans and seven were Federalists. There was little doubt that when the time came, they would cast their votes for President in the same partisan ratio. For the high places of President and Vice President, there were two tickets in the field; the Republican, represented by Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr, and the Federalist, represented by John Adams and Charles C. Pinckney.

Governor McKean at once notified "the said electors and every one of them, to meet at the Court House, in the Borough of Lancaster, at 12 o'clock of Wednesday, the third day of the present month of December."

They then met in the Court House as directed and voted according to expectations.

Adams.....	7 votes
Pinckney.....	7 votes
Jefferson.....	8 votes
Burr.....	8 votes

Governor McKean was moved by the result of the vote²⁵ to dash off to his great and good friend, Thomas Jefferson a detailed letter, which was entrusted for delivery to another good friend, General Peter Muhlenberg, who after a horseback journey of four or five days, duly delivered the same.

GOVERNOR THOMAS MCKEAN TO THOMAS JEFFERSON

Lancaster, December 15, 1800

Private

Dear Sir:—

Long ere this you must have learned, in behalf of this State, that at the election of President & Vice President of the United States, you and Mr. Burr had but eight votes and Messrs Adams and Pinckney seven votes each. Three fifths of the citizens of this State, had an opportunity afforded, would unquestionably have voted for the former and tho this was a fact known and admitted, yet thirteen senators making a majority of only two, in opposi-

²⁵ See "Early Presidential Elections in Lancaster County," by C. H. Martin, L. C. H. S., Vol. 48, page 93.

tion to a majority of thirty-two in the House of Representatives, have prevented the public will from being declared. The thirteen are execrated by the Whigs, they will never have the power to perpetrate the like mischief again and I cannot help using the words of St. Paul to Alexander the Copper-smith, "They have done much wrong, the Lord reward them according to their deeds."

Believe me, Sir, every honorable measure has been exerted to prevent this catastrophe; the principal causes of this event, independent of party principles appear to me to have been as follows, John Woods, Esquire, the Speaker of the Senate has ambition at least equal to his talents, and from the conduct of his brother-in-law, James Ross, Esquire, in our Senate & his brother Henry in the other House, and his own manœuvres in this business, expects in case of the election of either Mr. Adams or Mr. Pinckney that himself and Mr. Ross will be elevated to seats in the Judiciary Dept. of the U. S. or in the government of the territory west of this, as Governor St. Clair is not expected to live long. Samuel Postlewaite, Senator for Cumberland County is the brother-in-law of Henry Miller, Supervisor of this State and has been persuaded to believe, that if you were President, Miller would be removed. The like circumstance has influenced Dennis Wheeler, Senator for the Court of Chester, whose brother Israel is Purveyor Gen. at Philadelphia. These men in a great degree have governed their colleagues, all of whom are Anglo-federalists. Indeed, the officers of the customs at Philadelphia and all the officers under the President of the U. S. have leagued against you, and evidenced as much malignity as they displayed in my election. Similiar calumnies and baseness have been practiced in both cases. Henry Miller, General Hand, Robert Coleman have been in this borough since the Legislature have been convened, almost constantly keeping thirteen firm to the party. In addition to the letters almost daily written to them by a committee at Philadelphia, of which Thos. Fitzsimmons, Wm. Lewis, Wm. Rawle and several other Tories were members, a special committee was sent here by them near the approach of the election, fearing the Feds might waver. They gave the thirteen a dinner to cheer their spirits and keep them steady. Messrs. Henry and Wm. Miller were of the party. The latter is Commissioner of Revenue and now at Washington.

When all expectations of an election for this State had ceased, Wm. Findley, Esq., of the Senate, a true Republican, was induced to revive the affair by bringing in a Bill differing in form, tho in substance the same with the former one which passed rapidly thru that house, but with considerable opposition from the Republicans and some of the Tories; in the other, however a majority were at length prevailed upon to pass it, as it would prevent the precedent of a dereliction by a State of so important a Federal Duty and even one vote might possibly operate favorably to the Republicans cause; these considerations had weight with me, and obtained my concurrence. The Federalists are now dissatisfied with the outcome of the business.

It seemed to me proper that you should have this detail, whether we are successful or not in the great event; if South Carolina has not disappointed us, all will yet terminate propitiously; there will be 73 to 71 at the most. May God grant it for the good of my Country.

This will be delivered by General Muhlenberg. . . .

The Business of the Commonwealth Continues

There is a great mass of written material in the Pennsylvania Archives which is related to the period which this article covers, and it has been a problem to know what to use and what to cast aside. At least, every slip of paper must be looked at in expectation of discovering some new fact concerning the operation of the state government while it was situated in

Lancaster. Principally, the items which now follow show that the various departments of the commonwealth were not housed in the State House or the Town Hall, both of which were in the square, but in private buildings.

Dr. to the State of Pennsylvania
to Jacob Grace

For 52 days service with a waggon and five horses in carrying the laws of the Commonwealth passed in the last session of Assembly, The Journals of the two Houses and the Laws of the United States, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Volumes to the counties of Berks, Northampton, Dauphin, Wayne, Luzerne, Lycoming and Northumberland at 6 dollars per day as per agreement \$312

Lancaster March 5, 1800 (Receiver General)

Recd from F. A. Muhlenberg sixteen pounds 13/4 in full for office rent from the 4th of Dec 1799 to the 4th of April 1800
(Signed) John Miller

Lancaster July 1, 1800 Land Office

Tench Coxe paid one quarter Rent of Office \$33.33

The State of Pennsylvania

To Samuel Bryan (Auditor General)

To one year Rent of a Building for the accomodation of the Office of Register General due 15th of July, 1800

\$133.33

Approved by me
(Signed) Tho. McKean

Received July 17, 1800 — from Tench Coxe, Secretary of the Land Office of Pennsylvania forty five Dollars in full — the Rent for the Board of Property room for one year, also the sum of two dollars for wood.

Paid
(Signed) Peter Bier

One Quarters Salary due the following officers of Government —
Oct 1, 1800

Thomas McKean, Governor	\$1333.33
A. J. Dallas, Sec. of Commonwealth	500
James Trimble, Deputy Secretary	300
Edward Shippen, Chief Justice	666.66
Jasper Yeates, Asst. Justice	500
Thomas Smith, Asst. Justice	500
H. H. Brackenridge, Asst. Justice	500
John D. Coxe, Pres. 1st District	500
John Joseph Henry, Pres. 2nd District	400
Jacob Rush, Pres. 3rd District	400
James Riddle, Pres. 4th District	400
Alexander Addison, Pres. 5th District	400
John Donaldson, Comm. General	533.33
Samuel Bryan, Reg. Gen.	333.33
Peter Baynton, Treasurer	333.33
Samuel Cochran, Surveyor Gen.	333.33
Frederick A. Muhlenberg, Reg. Gen.	333.33
Tench Coxe, Sec. Land Office	333.33

Total 8599.97

Received 25th October, 1800
from Sam. Cochran, Surv. Gen. twenty three dollars and thirty cents being
in full for Office Rent & Rent for the Board of Property Room from 1st day of
July till 30th of September 1800 inclusive.

Nov. 1, 1800, Report of the Secretary of Land Office.

The Secretary of the Land Office has the honor to report to the Governor
that after examining the numerous and valuable Books and Papers under
his charge on his appointment in January he deemed it highly advisable to
procure offices in a firm and secure building, of brick or stone. The eastern
and western end of the former office was made of wood, there was no hearth
on which to set a very large stove . . . The books and papers were there-
fore removed to a convenient brick apartment, with safe chimneys and fire
places in the eastern end of town.

8th November 1800

Sam Cochran, Surveyor General paid Daniel Holeman \$3.00 for putting
up a ten-plate stove in office, also an open stove, also brick and lime for same,
and "for putting up panes of glass in office window."

I do hereby certify that I rented a room from Mr. John Graeff on the
11th Day of May 1799 for the purpose of Storing the Public Arms in the
Borough of Lancaster.

(Signed) Jeremiah Mosher

We, the subscribers having viewed the Room above mentioned do agree
that Mr. John Graeff is justly entitled to the yearly Rent of Nine pounds.

Dec 3, 1800

(Signed) John Messenkop
Henry Pinkerton

Dr. to the State of Pennsylvania
To Jonathan Haywood

To one Month Servitude as Watchman at Treasury Department com-
mencing November the 29th, 1800 and ending the 30th of December, 1800
\$12.00

Special Legislative Session Continues into Regular Session

When the Lancaster County Court House was given over to the Common-
wealth to be used as a State House, the county officials may have assumed
that the sessions of Assembly would not conflict with the holding of the
county courts. However the calling of the special 1800 session of Assembly
made is necessary that another place be found at once for the holding of
November court.

Fortunately, a place was available in the central part of the town. It
was the new lodge room of Lodge 43 of the Masonic Order, which had only
been completed in August of that year. Built on top of the Borough Market
House on West King Street, it was called in the minutes of the Borough
"the superstructure." The Masonic Order by special arrangement with the
Borough fathers had paid the cost of building this superstructure, and their
first lodge meeting in the new quarters was held on September 10, 1800.

In October, Michael Rhine, High Sheriff of Lancaster County, made
application to use the lodge room for holding county courts. The request
being granted, November Court was held there, for which privilege the Com-

missioners of Lancaster County paid thirty dollars. Court continued to be held there for some time.²⁶

The minutes of the County Commissioners give us this additional information:

Dec. 15, 1800, Commissioners paid John Heis for Carpenter work done to the Lodge Room for the accommodation of Court.

Dec. 29, 1800, Paid Jacob Martin, Treasurer of Lodge 43 for the use of their room for holding November Court.²⁷

The special session of Legislature continued so many days that it ran into the time of convening the regular session in December, 1800, for which reason there are no specific dates given in the records as to the ending of the special session and the beginning of the regular one.

On November 21, the Governor appeared before the Assembly with an address "Concerning the general State of the Commonwealth." He again brought to their attention the constitutional injunction "That the Legislature shall provide by law . . . for the establishment of Schools throughout the State . . . that the poor may be taught gratis."

Newspaper items concerning the Assembly in the closing weeks of 1800 follow.

Yesterday the Senate proceeded to the appointment of a Clerk, Sergeant-at-Arms and Door Keeper, when Joseph Bullock was chosen Clerk, Michael Pidgeon, Sergeant-at-Arms and Dietrich Heiss, Doorkeeper.

— *Lancaster Journal*
December 10, 1800

Yesterday at 3 o'clock in the afternoon both branches of the Legislature of this State met pursuant to adjournment.

Being barely a quorum in each House, neither proceeded to business, but both adjourned till this morning at 10 o'clock when it is probable they will resume the consideration of the important business before them.

— *Lancaster Intelligencer*
December 31, 1800

One of the acts of the Senate previous to their adjournment over the Holidays, was sending three of their members to the Hospital. It is to be regretted they had not done it a month sooner.

— *Lancaster Intelligencer*
December 31, 1800

Thomas Jefferson is Elected President

On New Years Day the Democratic Republicans of this state at the seat of government celebrated the success of the Republican cause in the election, by a majority of the people, of Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr to be President and Vice President of the United States.

²⁶ Information concerning the use of the Masonic Room was supplied by Carl F. Ernst, Secretary of Lodge 43, F. and A. M.

²⁷ From the minutes of the County Commissioners, Lancaster County Court House.

They assembled in Franklin College, where an entertainment was provided, under the direction of Mr. Slaymaker, undoubtedly superior to anything of the kind ever before exhibited in Lancaster.

There were present the Governor of the Commonwealth, the Speaker of the House, the Majority of the House and the minority of the Senate, most of the officers of the Government, Major General Irwin, etc.

After the dinner, toasts were drunk in the true spirit of liberty and with a display of that enthusiasm, tempered with moderation, which marks the true charm of real republicanism.²⁸

Jan 2, 1801
— *Lancaster Intelligencer*

The celebration referred in the foregoing paragraph did indeed proclaim a Republican victory; but the victory was not complete for it was then not known if Jefferson or Burr was to be President. The system in the Electoral College at the time provided that each elector would vote for two men, and that the one getting the highest number of electoral votes should be President while the runner up would be Vice President. Strangely enough, the electoral vote of 1800 resulted in a tie — 73 votes for Jefferson and 73 votes for Burr. The constitution further provided that such a vote would throw the election into the House of Representatives.

Thomas McKean was one who seemed rather sure that Mr. Jefferson would be the ultimate winner, for he lost no time in writing to that worthy gentlemen concerning a place for his son Robert.

GOVERNOR MCKEAN TO THOMAS JEFFERSON

Lancaster, Jan 10th, 1801

Dear Sir:—

The important election has so far been favorable for the Republicans, you and Mr. Burr have 73 votes each and the House of Representatives must on the second Wednesday of the next month, chuse one of you two to be President.

You will in a few weeks be wearied by applications and recommendations for office. . . . I have already resisted several solicitations for introductions to you, but importunity of friends has prevailed on me to name Stephen Sayre, Esq. and Wm. Irwin, Esq. as gentlemen worthy of your notice. I must beg your excuse for this liberty, but I have a son named Robert, who has had a liberal education, tho brought up as a merchant; if a vacancy should happen in the custom-house or any other department, I think him qualified to fill it. I shall beg your permission to interfere for him.

THOMAS JEFFERSON TO GOVERNOR MCKEAN

Washington, Feb. 2, 1801

His Excellency
Governor McKean
Lancaster

I have long waited for an opportunity to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of Dec 15, none occurring I shall either deliver the present to Genl. Muhlenberg or put it under cover to Doctor Wistar to whom I happen to be writing, to be sent to your house in Philadelphia or forwarded confidentially to Lancaster.

²⁸ Franklin College at this time was housed in the former public Store House (still standing on the west side of North Queen Street south of James, and now divided into dwelling houses). Governor McKean offered this toast at the Republican banquet, "Franklin College : May her sons emulate the virtue and useful knowledge of the great man whose name she bears."

The event of the election is still in doubt. A strong portion of the H of R would prevent an election if they can. I rather believe they will not be able to do it.

On February 11, balloting began in the House of Representatives at Washington for the high offices of President and Vice President, and after seven days and thirty-six ballots, Thomas Jefferson was declared elected as President and Burr as Vice President.

The news that Thomas Jefferson had been elected President reached Lancaster on February 20 and certain celebrants betook themselves to the Court House, fully determined to ring the bell atop that building as one way of announcing the notable Republican victory. The bell was rung, much to the dismay of the august Senators who were in their chamber in the same building engaged in debate with no intention of joining in the celebration. The Senate Journal tells a very interesting story about the incidents of the day.

A motion was made by Mr. Smith seconded by Mr. Barton and read as follows:

Whereas a noise and disturbance was made over and near the door of the Senate chamber on Friday and Saturday last, whilst the Senate was in session, greatly to the interruption of the business of the Senate, and such noise was continued, after repeated intervening by the officers of the Senate.

Therefore

Resolved that a committee of five members be appointed to enquire who were the authors of said noise and disturbance . . . and the measures which may be proper for the Senate to accept in relation to the person or persons concerned therein.

— Senate Journal
February twenty-third 1801

On the following day (February 24) the committee in reporting on the disturbance, stated that it "was not made with any view to disturb or insult the Senate, but arose from an expression of joy, at the election of the first magistrate of the Union." At the same time, the Committee "must report the noise and disturbance on Saturday last proceeded from a design of insulting the Senate — that a certain Peter Getz of the borough of Lancaster, was guilty of conduct highly indecorous and insulting, as it respected the Speaker and members of the Senate."

The committee was next instructed to procure sworn statements from witnesses to the alleged indecorous conduct. Dietrich Heiss, doorkeeper of the Senate appeared before Jacob Graeff and having been duly sworn, stated:

"On Friday last I heard a noise and went out. I saw a whole parcel of boys and Mr. Reichenbach ringing the bell. I told him it made too much noise and disturbed the Senate. He said he would only let them ring it a while, and after a few minutes took the boys away.

On Saturday the 21st instant Mr. Pigeon was sent out first, then after they were so noisy, Mr. Speaker sent me out to tell them to be silent, to stop the bell until we adjourned, and they might ring as long as they pleased. I went upstairs to Mr. Getz, and told him, but he was so busy, he would not be disturbed and would ring whether or not. . . . he would not hear me, said he would ring, and see who would keep him from it; that he was no federalist, but a republican, and he would see who would prevent him. Then when I came down stairs, I saw the Speaker and told him what Mr.

Getz said; the Speaker came out. . . . The Speaker spoke civilly to Mr. Getz and told him not to make any disturbance but wait until they had adjourned. Mr. Getz made the same reply to him that he made to me. . . . The Speaker then ordered him downstairs immediately; it seemed he did not go immediately and then the Speaker went after him and kicked at him. I saw the Speaker kick at him once but do not know whether he hit him."

Michael Pigeon, the Sergeant-at-Arms of the Senate also appeared before Jacob Graeff and did depose and say:

"When I got to the head of the stairs, I saw Mr. Frederick Steinman with his hand on the bell rope encouraging the boys to ring. I told Mr. Steinman²⁹ if that bell was to be rung, it must not be rung by the boys who made too much noise. He said the bell must be rung, but told the boys to go down.

On Saturday . . . there was the same noise on the stairs. . . . I had gone after the boys, who were more violent than the day before. The door that goes under the roof was open. Peter Getz was there with the rope in his hand showing the boys how to ring the bell. I told Mr. Getz that the Senate was disturbed. He, in a hasty and passionate manner said the bell must be rung, that he would ring it in spite of anybody (Pigeon then saw the Speaker come on the scene and kick Peter Getz) Getz then run pretty smart down the stairs and when he got to the lower flight, he turned round and called the Speaker a damned rascal, a damned eternal rascal."

Whereas on Saturday last at the time when several inhabitants of this borough were ringing the court house bell, in testimony of their joy that the impending evils that menaced the tranquillity of this country were removed by the election of Mr. Jefferson to be President of the United States and Mr. Burr to be Vice President; . . . and as the Speaker became the guardian of his own honor by taking the law into his own hand and punishing this citizen imprudently on the spot,

Therefore

Resolved that the Senate will drop any further prosecution of this unpleasant affair.

— Journal of the Senate
Wednesday February 25, 1801

The above resolution by a vote of 9 yeas and 11 nays failed of passage, whereupon the Senate resolved that Peter Getz should appear before the bar of the Senate on the following day. However, said Peter Getz did not put in his appearance before the Senate as requested; and he was then put into the custody of the Sergeant-of-Arms for further disposition.

One of the first appointments of Thomas Jefferson after his inauguration on the fourth of March was that of Alexander J. Dallas to be United States Attorney for Eastern Pennsylvania. This took out of Governor McKean's official family an able Secretary of the Commonwealth and one to whom he had become greatly attached. Jefferson took time to write to McKean concerning the Dallas appointment and McKean returned the favor, graciously accepting the loss of Dallas as his right hand cabinet officer.

²⁹ John Frederick Steinman was a hardware merchant and in 1801 was elected as Chief Burgess of Lancaster Borough. Peter Getz was a silversmith, whose products are much sought after to-day. His shop was located, in the first square of South Queen Street.

March 9, 1801

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of Feb. 20 and to thank you for your congratulations on the event of the election. Had it terminated in the election of Mr. Burr, every Republican would I am sure have acquiesced in a moment, because however it may have been at variance with the intentions of the voters, yet it would have been agreeable to the constitution. No man would have submitted more cheerfully than myself, because I am sure the administration would have been republican, and the chair of the Senate permitting me to be at home 8 months in the year, would on that account have been more consonant to my real satisfaction. But in the event of a usurpation I was decidedly with them who were determined not to permit it, because that precedent once set would be artificially reproduced and end soon in a dictator. . . . I am anxious by availing the U. S. in some way of the honest worth of General Muhlenberg to remove the danger of past and future divisions among you. We propose to supercede Kittera by Mr. Dallas the superiority of whose character will suppress all criticism yet I am afraid we shall thereby deprive you of an able assistant. It is said however that the removal to Lancaster is inconsistent with his other business and therefore that he meditates a resignation of his present office.

GOVERNOR MCKEAN TO PRESIDENT JEFFERSON

March 19, 1801

. . . If General Muhlenberg should be put in the place of Henry Miller, Supervisor of the Excise, it would fully gratify him and I firmly believe, a more popular removal and appointment could not be made. . . . It is with reluctance, I confess that I part with Mr. Dallas, not more on account of his talents than his fidelity. However as the office you have given him is more convenient if not more profitable to him as Secretary, I submit for I wish him happiness. . . . I offered Mr. Cooper³⁰ the offices of Prothonotary, Register of Wills and all the Clerkships in the new County of Centre the day after he was liberated from durance vile, but he declined on account of his attachment to Doctor Priestly from whom he would have been removed near 80 miles. Next year I expect to have it in my power to make him president judge of a district, the salary D1600 a year. I shall imitate my friend, the late President Adams in securing my friends offices from which they cannot readily be removed, however unworthy, only *my* intentions favor an amiable and learned man.

Ten days after the inauguration of Thomas Jefferson, the Republicans of Lancaster assembled to celebrate the event.

On Wednesday last a number of the republican citizens of the borough, with such of the civil officers of the State as were in Town, assembled at Mr. Eichholtz's tavern to celebrate the inauguration of Thomas Jefferson to the presidency of the United States.

—*Lancaster Journal*³¹
March 14, 1801

³⁰ Thomas Cooper, scientist and economist, came to Pennsylvania in 1794 with Dr. Joseph Priestly. During the state political campaign of 1799, in the *Northumberland Gazette* (Sunbury), he published editorials which were favorable to McKean.

³¹ The "Bull's Head" tavern of Leonard Eichholtz was located on the southeast corner of King and Christian streets.

Proceedings in the Assembly, January and February, 1801

On Tuesday last, both Branches of the Legislature assembled in the Senate to elect a Treasurer. Upon counting the Votes, there appeared to be

For Jacob Carpenter Esq. 57

For Peter Baynton Esq. 40

— *Lancaster Journal*

Jan. 17, 1801

Mr. Pearson read a bill entitled "An Act establishing schools throughout the Commonwealth in such manner that the poor may be taught gratis" and with permission of the Senate, said bill was read the first time.

— *Senate Journal*

Jan. 22, 1801

The committee to whom was referred the bill entitled "An Act to complete the abolition of slavery in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."

Reports, that they have considered the subject committed to them with due attention, and are warranted by the constitution to declare it as their opinion that slavery does not exist in this State, and therefore to pass the act . . . would be doubting the principle of equal liberty dispensed to all men by the first section of the ninth article of the said constitution. From these impressions they are further of the opinion that it is improper and unnecessary to pass any act for this purpose.

— *Senate Journal*

Jan. 27, 1801

The Senate of Pennsylvania have under consideration a bill "for removing obstructions in the river Susquehanna, and in conjunction with the States of Delaware and Maryland to open a communication between the river Delaware and the Chesapeake bay."

Captain Hunn, George Logan and Presley Carr Lane, were appointed commissioners, who have departed to Dover for the purpose intended.

— *Lancaster Journal*³²

Jan 31, 1801

LETTER TO MR. HAMILTON, EDITOR, LANCASTER JOURNAL

Feb. 7, 1801

So, then, his excellency and his republican friends in the Legislature, are meditating a return to Philadelphia, To that seat of corruption and aristocracy and from whence it was thought necessary to remove. . . . About two years ago we were told, that our virtuous country members were so much under the influence of good dinners that they must absolutely be snatched away from the city or Pennsylvania was undone. Now, we find the note changed, and that the city is the only proper seat of government.

— *Lancaster Journal*

February 7, 1801

The commissioners to Delaware reported that while at Dover a law was passed

"An act to incorporate a company for the purpose of cutting and making a canal between the Chesapeake Bay and the bay or river Delaware or the waters thereof."

— *Lancaster Journal*

February 14, 1801

On Wed. last the two branches of the Pennsylvania legislature met in the chamber of the house of representatives and proceeded to the choice of

³² The Chesapeake and Delaware Canal was eventually built and opened in 1829.

a person to represent this state in the Senate of the United States.

Doctor Logan received 45 votes.

General Peter Muhlenberg received 46 votes.

Lancaster County Gives Court House to State, Rent Free

Wishing to know what rent the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was expected to pay for the use of the Lancaster County Court House, a committee from the Assembly waited on the County Commissioners in the month of February, 1801. The following record, showing that the commissioners did not expect any rent is taken from the minute book of the Lancaster County Commissioners.

A committee of the Legislature consisting of the members of the County waited on the Commissioners with the following Resolution
viz:

Whereas it is expedient to know on what Tenure and upon what condition the public Buildings at the Seat of Government are held by the Legislature and the several Offices attached to the Government therefore,

Resolved

That a committee be appointed to make enquiry of the Commissioners of the County of Lancaster for the purpose of ascertaining whether any and if what Rent may be required or demanded for the use of the Court House and the other public Buildings occupied in part by the officers of the Government.

Answer of the Commissioners to the Committee of the Legislature respecting the use of the Public Buildings of Lancaster County.

Gentlemen:

The public Buildings of the County of Lancaster, we understood were given up to the Legislature by the former Commissioners without any expectation of Receiving Rent, and we have no idea of any charge of the kind on our part.

(Signed) Adam Reigart, Jr.
Amos Slaymaker

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
In the House of Representatives
February 27, 1801

Resolved

That in the opinion of this House the disclaiming of any compensation by the Commissioners of Lancaster County, for the use of the County buildings is highly honorable to the citizens of the said County

Resolved

That the desire to accomodate the Legislature enriched by the liberal conduct of the inhabitants of Lancaster County affords a pleasing proof of their patriotism and public spirit and merits the thanks of this House.

Resolved

That the Clerk do forthwith present to the Commissioners of Lancaster County a copy of these Resolutions.

— From the Minutes of the
Lancaster County Commissioners

The Legislature adjourned on February 27, the day on which the above resolutions were passed by the House and sent to the Lancaster County Commissioners; and the members indeed would have been most unappreciative if they departed from Lancaster for their homes with any but the kindest

feelings for the Lancaster County Commissioners who had actually given over the Lancaster County Court House to the State of Pennsylvania, rent free for an undetermined time.³³

Governor McKean Appoints Nephew to Succeed A. J. Dallas

Appointed by Governor McKean to succeed A. J. Dallas in the portfolio of Secretary of the Commonwealth, Thomas McKean Thompson, a nephew of the Governor removed to Lancaster in April, 1801. About the same time, Elbert Hope Halsted, a brother-in-law of Thompson, also came to Lancaster, having received a clerkship, and shortly thereafter died here at the age of 22 or 23 years. "Elbert's physician was a Doctor May . . . devoted disciple of the celebrated Doctor Rush. Their general remedy for disease was bleeding." Elbert Halsted lived with the Thompsons at Lancaster as did also Elbert's father, John, and Governor McKean during the remainder of his years as Governor.

Thomas McKean Thompson left a narrative of his years in public life in Pennsylvania, and from that narrative is cited the following paragraph which refers to his residence in Lancaster.³⁴

"John Halsted came to Lancaster as clerk in the office of Comptroller General filled by George Duffield, Esquire. He continued to occupy his place in Mr. Duffield's office during our residence at Lancaster, and till the termination of Governor McKean's administration in March, 1809, and appeared to enjoy himself well. . . . Governor McKean's family continued to reside in Philadelphia during his administration. He was obliged himself to be at the seat of Government in Lancaster on an average about half the year, but with the exception of one year (when he kept house) he resided as a Boarder in my family during our eight years residence in Lancaster. . . . You know, it is an adage that old folks are loquacious, such at any rate was the case with the Governor and John Halsted. They were both fond of talking and at times very lively so that on our long winter evenings in the absence of other company we were often entertained by the relation of various anecdotes diverting or interesting with their past lives."

Death Comes to Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg

On June 6, 1801, Frederick Augustus Conrad Muhlenberg, member of one of Pennsylvania's prominent and most remarkable families, breathed his last in his home at Lancaster. He had taken up his residence in Lancaster little more than a year before, having been appointed as Receiver General of the Land Office by Governor McKean on January 8, 1800. However, Lancaster County was no strange land to Frederick Muhlenberg, for in 1770, under the guidance of his father, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, the patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America, he had begun a promising ministerial career as pastor of a Lancaster County charge consisting of Manheim, Brickerville,

³³ In 1812 the Commonwealth gave to the County of Lancaster a sum in excess of \$10,000 for the use of the county buildings, the details of which will be provided in a subsequent installment of this paper.

³⁴ From "Narrative of Thomas McKean Thompson," by P. F. Thompson, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 52.

White Oak and Schaefferstown. It was thirty years later that Frederick Muhlenberg took up the duties of a state office in Lancaster, where his brother Henry Ernestus was the beloved pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, as well as president of Franklin College. The Muhlenbergs had already left an imprint on Lancaster borough and county and Frederick Augustus, too, would soon have become an important figure in the town if death had not brought an untimely end to his career.³⁵

Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, Esquire, late receiver-general of the land office, died at the age of 51 years.

At 11 o'clock on the Tuesday preceding his death, he repaired from his own house to the office of the Surveyor-General, to attend a meeting of the board of property. He was then in his usual state of high health; but in less than an hour from that time, he was suddenly seized with a violent apoplectic fit, to which his plethoric habit and extreme corpulence had perhaps predisposed him. This stroke was soon succeeded by two others of greater severity; and within 50 hours from his first attack, his dissolution took place.

Thus departed from this transitory scene, a man truly estimable in public and private life. He was generous, charitable and benevolent and possessed a sound understanding, cultivated by a liberal education.

Mr. Muhlenberg has left a widow and six children to lament his loss.

— *Lancaster Journal*

June 13, 1801

Pastor Henry Muhlenberg himself made the notation in the record book of Trinity parish which recorded the burial of his brother in the cemetery on South Duke Street.

June 5, 1801

On our cemetery, Frederick August Muhlenberg, formerly Receiver General, My brother, Died the 4th of apoplexy—51 years, 5 months, 2 days old.

— From the Parish Records

Trinity Lutheran Church ³⁶

Editor Hamilton Rants and Raves

William Hamilton, ardent Federalist and editor of the *Lancaster Journal* seemingly did not gain many friends among State officials as the months lengthened during McKean's first term as Governor; and that is not surprising for he continued to lambast with biting sarcasm those McKean appointees whom he especially disliked. Two men who suffered under the editorial whip of Hamilton were Timothy Matlack, Master of the Rolls, and Tench Coxe, Secretary of the Land office.

³⁵ Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg was born at Trappe in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, and was educated by his father and at Halle University, Germany. His ministry in Lancaster County ended in 1773 when he accepted a call as pastor of Christ Church in New York City. Entering civil life after the Revolution, he was a member of the first four Congresses of The United States and Speaker of the first and third sessions. See "Muhlenberg Family in Lancaster County," H. M. J. Klein, L. C. H. S., Vol. 46, page 137.

³⁶ The remains of F. A. C. Muhlenberg were later removed to the Muhlenberg plot in Woodward Hill Cemetery, Lancaster.

Shortly after Mr. Matlack had deserted the plain religion of the people called Quakers, he appeared in the streets of Philadelphia, strutting with a long sword by his side. Being met by a respectable member of the Society of Friends, he was accosted thus, "Well, Timothy, what are thou about to do with Thy sword?" "To defend my property and liberty," says Matlack. "As to thy property, it is well known Thou hast none, and for thy liberty, friend Timothy, thou hast to thank thy creditors." . . . When he first came to Lancaster, he said he would teach the people their rights, that they were heretofore too ignorant to see the blessings of Democracy. . . . He has forced himself to the presidency of almost every meeting. . . . he has dictated almost every wicked measure that has taken place in the borough.

— *Lancaster Journal*
July 25, 1801

A OPEN LETTER TO MR. MATLACK

I am told that when you read my paper of Saturday last, you flew into a tremendous passion — that you ran bare-headed like a maniac through the greater part of Orange Street³⁷ — that you froun'd, Grinn'd, stamp'd, and rav'd in alternate seconds — that on returning to your house about noon, you cursed the wife, and the cook, upset the dinner table, plates, dishes, kicked a poor lap-dog and then threw a cat out of the window.

— *Lancaster Journal*
August 1, 1801

GOOD NEWS — GREAT NEWS — GLORIOUS NEWS

Let the harsh trumpet sound — ring the loud clarion and the pealing bells. Let the children squall, dogs bark, cats mew, cocks crow, horses neigh, cows bellow, frogs croak, hogs grunt, pigs squeak, and turkeys gobble. Let every bird and beast and creeping thing extent its lungs and roar jocundity. Let the people of this once happy borough rest from their labors and join in rejoicing, for the happy event.

TENCH COXE IS TO LEAVE LANCASTER — in a few days — we hope never to return.

This extraordinary character has been found worthy of fresh honors and emoluments — and goes a step higher on the ladder of democracy.

He returns to Philadelphia and we are told is to get the office of Mr. Ash (Collector of the Excise), a tried and honest man.

— *Lancaster Journal*
Sept. 26, 1801

NEW FACES IN STATE OFFICES

On July 25, 1801, Governor McKean appointed as Receiver General of the State in the place of the late Frederick A. Muhlenberg, a Lancaster man, John McKissick by name. He continued in the duties of this position until 1809 when the office was abolished. McKissick then removed to Columbia, where until his death, he was a prominent banker.

On October 3, 1801, a new appointee of Governor McKean took over as Secretary of the Land Office in the place of Tench Coxe, resigned. His name was Andrew Ellicott, native of Bucks County and a civil engineer of unusual ability. It was he who completed the surveying of the area on the banks of the Potomac so that the capital city of our nation might be

³⁷ The home of Timothy Matlack was at the corner of Orange and Jefferson streets.

developed thereon. Andrew Ellicott lived in Lancaster from 1801 to 1813, during which period he was an active trustee of Franklin College and a trustee as well of the First Methodist Church. The home of Andrew Ellicott on the southeast corner of Prince and Marion streets was suitably marked with a bronze tablet by the Lancaster County Historical Society in 1950.

Legislators Convene for 1801-1802 Session

In two letters to his wife, Governor McKean tells of his arrival in Lancaster for the convening of another Legislature and of his residence at the home of "the Secretary" — his nephew Thomas McKean Thompson — as well as of the opening of the Assembly.

Lancaster, December 1, 1801

I arrived here before dusk on Sunday, having enjoyed two very pleasant days for travelling; but the poor beasts were a little galled, owing to the neglect of the coachman in putting on the false collars.

About a dozen Gentlemen from this borough, all officers of Government, met me on the road two miles from town and escorted me to the Secretarys where I am now in good health.

The House of Representatives met to-day and chose Isaac Weaver, Esquire, my friend, Speaker. The senate will be organized to-morrow.

Lancaster, December 3, 1801

With many gentlemen waiting around me, I have only time to tell you, that the bearer hereof drives the wagon of Mr. Henry Pinkerton of this borough and expects to be in Phila. on Monday morning; where I hope you will prepare a load for him to this place. Be sure to send the trunk in which I put my papers and clothes; please to fill it as compactly as possible. . . . The sooner every thing is sent here the better, as the season is so far advanced.

Samuel McClay, Esquire, is elected Speaker of the Senate by a unanimous vote. Francis Gurney the last Speaker was present. What mortifications do the vain, the proud and the insolent often endure. Of the eight senators of the famous fifteen, called the Spartan band, one Mr. King has resigned and a Mr. Dennis Whelan is said to be deranged; so they are reduced to six. One of the Federalists in the House died this morning of an apoplexy, his name Abiah Taylor of Chester County.

The activities of the Assembly in the opening days of the 1801-1802 Session may best be told by several news items and extracts from the Governor's opening address to the Assembly.

Last Tuesday (Dec. 1) being the day appointed by the constitution for the meeting of the legislature of this state a number of the members of the Senate assembled in their chambers in the State House; but not being a quorum, they adjourned till Wednesday, at ten o'clock.

Samuel Maclay, Esq., is appointed Speaker of the Senate.

Billy and Bobby Dickson are appointed printers of the Bills and Journals of the Senate.

Christian J. Hutter is printer of the German Journals.

James Alexander — Sergeant-at-Arms.

Dietrich Heiss — Door-Keeper.

In the house of Representatives 75 members being present, they proceeded to the choice of a Speaker; and Isaac Weaver, Esq., was unanimously elected.

Matthew Hutton, Esq., is appointed Clerk of the House of Representatives.

James Thackera, Esq., Assistant.

Francis Bailey, appointed printer of the English Journal of the same house.

Messrs. Grimler and Solomon Mayer, printers of the German Journals.
James Martin, Sergeant-at-Arms.
Joseph Frey, Door-Keeper.

— *Lancaster Journal*
Dec. 5, 1801

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

At its first session, Mr. Ferguson moved that the word HONORABLE be struck out before the name of the speaker, stated that "it was a foreign word and inconsistent with republican simplicity, the nature and genius of our government." The motion was lost.

— *Lancaster Journal*
Dec. 5, 1801

"The instituting of public schools is an arrangement which the constitution expressly devolves on the wisdom of the Legislature."

"Contracts have been entered into for improving the navigation of the Susquehanna from Wright's Ferry to the Maryland line, and the work has been far advanced."

"Repeated visits from Indian chiefs on affairs interesting to the community have occurred since my administration; and in a late instance, I have been able, at some expense and trouble, with the benevolent co-operation of a few respectable members of the Society of Friends to mediate between two neighboring tribes of the Senecas and Muncy Indians, so as to avert the hostilities with which they violently menaced each other."

— Extracts from Opening Address
to the Assembly by Gov. McKean
Lancaster, December 5, 1801

Stacy Potts, representative from Dauphin County, introduced this resolution:

"As the happiness and convenience of the citizens of this commonwealth and the preservation and security of their property, are the primary and important objects of Legislative deliberation, it becomes our duty to consider the propriety of placing the officers attached to the government thereof in such a situation as will permit their procuring for themselves residences with convenient accommodations during the time they may continue in office, without subjecting them to the caprice of others, and the immense property held under the records of the State, at least in as secure a situation as the less important records of the different counties; Therefore Resolved, that a grand committee be appointed to take these important objects into consideration and report the most eligible place to fix the permanent seat of Government of this State, with such other further observations as the case may require."

— *House Journal*
Dec. 9, 1801

The Assembly observed the usual Christmas holiday in 1801, during which period Governor McKean remained in Lancaster. Writing to his wife on the last day of the year, he told of entertaining during the holiday season and informed her that he had procured hay and oats (for the horses) and pork (for human consumption) all in anticipation of a visit by his family.

Lancaster, December 31, 1801

Dear Madam

On Saturday last, the Speakers of the two Houses and eight of the principal officers of Government with Major General Nevill and the Adjutant

General Humpton dined with me; everything was conducted as well as I expected, but not as well as I wished.

I have procured two tons of excellent hay, 50 bushels of good oats and near 60 lb. of choice Pork, so that I am prepared for the reception of my family, but more furniture is wanting, tho I have purchased some here, the particulars I have no time to enumerate. Please to send my money box, clothes-brush, two looking glasses, some beds and furniture, towels, etc., but no tables or chairs. Mr. Pinkerton's waggon which brought up the last load will proceed to-morrow for Philadelphia, and will call on you, perhaps on Saturday morning.

My health, thank God, remains good; but were it not from the duties of my office, visits of ceremony and books, I would be very lonesome. As to the tempests and irritations in public station, I have been so long habituated to them that they now make a weak impression upon me; the oldest sailor cannot bear the buffetings of the waves with more *sang-froid* than I can. . . . I expect the Legislature will assemble for the members have generally arrived.

(To be continued in 1952)