

# *When Lancaster Was Pennsylvania's Capital*

BY GEORGE L. HEIGES

*Continued from Vol. LV, No. 1*

New Year's Day in 1802 was obviously not observed as a holiday, for on that day both houses of the Pennsylvania State Assembly were in session at Lancaster, the seat of government. Reading the legislative journal of that day, it does not appear that anything of great importance transpired. In the Senate, Mr. Hamilton presented a petition from certain subscribers which stated that an academy had been established in the town of Washington and praying the Legislature to grant such donations as in their wisdom they would see fit. To this project, which in time would be known as Washington and Jefferson College, the Assembly had already given \$3000.

In the lower house of the Pennsylvania Legislature, a special committee reported that furniture belonging to the state "consisting of chairs, desks, writing tables and carpets is deposited in a chamber of the statehouse in the city of Philadelphia; some of the furniture somewhat injured, and all of it as present entirely useless." The committee offered a resolution, "That the clerks of the respective houses cause the clerks' writing desks and chairs to be transported to this place, for the accommodation of the legislature and that the governor be . . . required to direct the sale of the residue of the furniture, at such time . . . as to him shall appear most expedient; and that the doorkeepers . . . be directed to sell the chairs now occupied by the legislature."

The principal officers of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, as of January 1, 1802, were the following men, nearly all of whom had established residence in Lancaster.

Governor	Thomas McKean
Secretary of the Commonwealth	Thomas McKean Thompson
Deputy Secretary	James Trimble
Attorney General	Joseph B. McKean <sup>1</sup>
Controller General	Samuel Bryan

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Borden McKean, the Attorney General, was the eldest son of Governor McKean.

Register General .....	George Duffield <sup>2</sup>
Treasurer .....	Jacob Carpenter
Surveyor General .....	Samuel Cochran
Secretary of the Land Office .....	Andrew Ellicott
Receiver General .....	John McKissick
Clerk in Controller's Office .....	John M. Hall
Clerk in Register General's Office .....	Elbert N. Halsted
Clerk in Register General's Office .....	Robert McElwee
Clerk in Register General's Office .....	Caesar R. Wilson
Clerk in Treasury Department .....	Alexander Wilson
Clerk in Surveyor General's Office .....	Samuel Clendenin
Clerk in Surveyor General's Office .....	Edward James
Clerk in Surveyor General's Office .....	Edward Mott
Clerk in Land Office .....	George Worrell
Clerk in Land Office .....	John M. Millen
Clerk in Land Office .....	Ephraim Mouton
Clerk in Receiver General's Office .....	Philip E. Muhlenberg
Clerk in Receiver General's Office .....	David P. Muhlenberg
Clerk in Receiver General's Office .....	Peter S. Muhlenberg <sup>3</sup>

### A Petition from Trinity Church

On Tuesday, January 5, in the State Senate, "Mr. Barton presented the petition of the minister, trustees, elders and church wardens of the German Lutheran Congregation in and near the borough of Lancaster, stating that they have erected a large and elegant steeple on their church; and although large sums of money have been raised by the congregation for this purpose, they are unable to defray the whole expense and provide suitable bells; and praying leave to bring in a bill to authorize them to raise by way of lottery, a sum of money not exceeding 8000 dollars to answer their ends."

The Senate acted favorably and quickly on the petition from the German (Trinity) Lutheran Church and a bill was duly presented and had a quick finish. On January 12, "Agreeable to the order of the day, the Bill for raising by way of a lottery 8000 dollars for the exigencies of the German Lutheran Church . . . was considered; and on the question was determined in the negative: yeas 9 nays 12, so the Bill was lost."

While some years would elapse before lotteries would be forbidden by legislative action, and even though the Assembly of 1803 would sanction

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<sup>2</sup> George Duffield, the Register General, lived at Strasburg in Lancaster County. He was a son of the Rev. George Duffield, native of Pequea Township, who served as a Presbyterian pastor at Carlisle and at the Third Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. While there, he was appointed Chaplain of Congress in 1784. George Duffield, the Register General, also had a son, George, who served a notable Presbyterian pastorate of thirty years in Detroit.

<sup>3</sup> When Frederick A. C. Muhlenberg came to Lancaster to assume the office of Receiver General, he hired as his clerks, his son, David, and two of his nephews. Peter Muhlenberg was a son of General Peter Muhlenberg, and John Philip Emanuel Muhlenberg was a son of Rev. Henry Muhlenberg, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Lancaster. Because all of the clerks in his office were of his own family, F. A. C. Muhlenberg was accused of nepotism. After the death of Frederick, the three young Muhlenbergs were retained by his successor, John McKissick.

some lotteries, sentiment against lotteries was very evident at the beginning of the session. The trend was indicated in a letter which appeared in *The Intelligencer* on January 20, over the signature, "A Member of the Legislature." The communication complained about gambling houses in Lancaster, and was addressed "To the Burgesses." It contained this one sentence concerning lotteries: "The Legislature of Pennsylvania appears to be utterly opposed to lotteries and there is no probability of their sanctioning any, however plausible the application."<sup>4</sup>

## Extracts from The Press and State Records—January 1, 1802 to Adjournment of State Assembly, April 16, 1802

The papers of Governor Thomas McKean's nine years of incumbency fill forty folio volumes. Much of the material is concerned with routine business and is dull reading; but interspersed throughout are letters, memoranda and receipts which greatly assist us in visualizing Lancaster Borough, when it was indeed the hub of Pennsylvania political life and activity. The following items, arranged chronologically, are from the papers of Governor McKean, the legislative journals, the public press and the Ellicott papers. In the letters of Andrew Ellicott, Land Office Secretary, we get interesting glimpses of that man in his off-duty role of astronomer.<sup>5</sup>

Jan. 2, 1802	
The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to Frederick Steinman	
Oct. 29, 1801	
To Writing Desk Lock	0 . 3. 0
4 Pen Knives	15. 4
Shovel & Tongs	18. 9
2 Pr. Snuffers	11. 4
	2 . 9. 2
Rec'd the above in full Jan. 2, 1802	
(Signed) Frederick Steinman	

Received January 15, 1802, from Andrew Ellicott, Esq. Land Office, fifty cents in full for a Penknife for the use of the office.

(Signed) Frederick Steinman

The high-handed measures of the present chief magistrate of Pennsylvania, the loftiness of his deportment thro all the privations of office, have awakened the feelings of every friend to moderation. Those who were once his most ardent supporters discover in the two years of his administration, few traits of disinterested republicanism, and not a solitary subject for eulogy.

(Signed) Americanus  
—*Lancaster Journal*  
Jan. 30, 1802

<sup>4</sup> The Assembly of 1802-1803 before its close actually sanctioned three lotteries.

<sup>5</sup> The papers of Andrew Ellicott are deposited in the Library of Congress.

LETTER FROM ANDREW ELLICOTT, SECRETARY OF THE LAND OFFICE  
TO PRESIDENT THOMAS JEFFERSON

Lancaster, Jan. 31, 1802

. . . Owing to a great press of business in the land office and an uncommon portion of cloudy weather, I have made but few observations lately, since I wrote to you last and these have generally been equal altitudes of the sun and the eclipse of Jupiter's satellites.

. . . Our legislature has been in session a great part of the winter but the republican interest has such a decided ascendancy that party violence appears to have wholly subsided in that body. Governor McKean's firmness like the club of Hercules has crushed the opposition and in all probability secured his reelection.

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Some of the Democrats have had the audacity to assert that the Federalists had no right to the name of Republican.

—*Lancaster Journal*  
Jan. 30, 1802

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Lancaster, Feb. 2, 1802

John McKissick, Receiver General

Bot of David R. Barton—6 Plate Stove for the Rec. Gen. Office £3. 0. 0  
Rec. Payment

(Signed) David R. Barton

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The Committee appointed the 8th of December last on that part of the Governor's Address relative to Public Schools, reported a Bill making provision for the Education of poor children, gratis.

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
February 3, 1802

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Died, James Alexander, Sergeant at Arms of the Senate—on Monday, his remains were interred in the Presbyterian burial ground, attended by the members of the legislature and a number of respectable citizens.

—*Lancaster Journal*  
February 4, 1802

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Moved by Mr. Pearson, seconded by Mr. Barton.

"Resolved that a committee be appointed in conjunction with a committee of the House of Representatives, to consider the propriety of erecting three or more Posts and Lamps near to the Court-House, now occupied by Legislature."

—*Journal of the Senate*  
February 5, 1802

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ANDREW ELLICOTT TO ROBERT PATTERSON, V. P. OF  
THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Lancaster, Feb. 7, 1802

. . . We are so much hurried at present in the land office that I scarcely have a minute to call my own either day or night, but this press of business will end with the rising of the legislature when I intend paying you a visit. . . . I fear the Seat of Government of this State will be carried to Harrisburg. If this fear should be realized, I shall think seriously of resigning. We are in great want of such a man as Gallatin in the Legislature.

Lancaster 9th Feb. 1802

Received of John McKissick Receiver General 10 shillings and nine pence  
in full for splitting and piling wood for Rec. Gen. Office.

\$1.43

(signed) Andrew Keller

A motion was made by Mr. Gordon, seconded by Mr. Conrad, and read  
as follows:

"Whereas it has been the constant practice of all civilized nations from  
the earliest ages to perpetuate the great and virtuous men, it cannot be less  
the duty of a free republican state to pay a proper tribute of respect to  
the memory of their late chief, Therefore

"Resolved, that a committee be appointed to enquire into the situation  
of the grave of the late Thomas Mifflin, Esquire, late Governor of this com-  
monwealth, and what further steps are necessary to be taken by the Legis-  
lature to perpetuate the memory of his services to posterity and report  
to the House by bill or otherwise. Ordered to be laid on the table."

—House Journal

Wed., February 17, 1802

Governor McKean signed "An Act to provide for the education of Poor  
Children gratis."

—Senate Journal

March 1, 1802

ANDREW ELLICOTT TO M. DELAMBRE, EMINENT FRENCH ASTRONOMER

Lancaster, March 10, 1802

... there is not within the United States a single observatory, nor a  
single citizen except myself who is paying any attention to practical astron-  
omy, and what I do is at my own expense. The President of the United  
States is a lover of science and a man of science himself, but he has no  
power by our constitution to aid any branch of philosophy, mechanics or  
literature unless it is at his own cost ...

ANDREW ELLICOTT TO PRESIDENT THOMAS JEFFERSON

Lancaster, March 10, 1802

... We have been extremely hurried in the Land Office that I can  
scarcely find leisure to sleep. But this press of business will end when the  
Legislature rises. I intend then to put up a small observatory and make  
a course of observations upon the refraction of the rays of light near  
the horizon ...

Bangor Church (Lancaster County), had given to them £100 by Nathan  
Evans, late of Caernarvon Township to purchase 3 bells for the church.  
However the church asked Legislature for permission to use the money to  
buy stock of the United States instead.

"Special committee stated that sum would not pay for one Bell suitable  
for a church and that if the sum were sufficient, yet the Bells would be  
useless, as Bangor Church is without a steeple."

Passed and signed by the Governor."

—Senate Journal

March 15, 1802

Alexander Kettering of Londonderry Township, Dauphin County sent  
a lengthy letter to the speaker of the Senate to tell him that he had a drug  
which had been used in Germany for 250 years to cure the bite of a mad  
dog. He was advanced in years and asked permission to appear before the

<sup>6</sup> Bangor Episcopal Church in Churchtown.

Senate "and explain the subject." He wrote, "You will take a more effectual way to diffuse the information."

A committee consisting of Senators Pearson, Porter and Lower was appointed to confer with Kettering. They brought back a report that Kettering informed them "that he used the herb called chick-weed which when ripe, he gathers, dries and gives a small tablespoonful at one time to a grown person in beer or water. He assures us that he has given it to persons many weeks after they were bitten and never knew it to fail."

The committee reported further that "They also learned from The Reverend Henry Muhlenberg that it is an annual plant known in Switzerland and Germany by the name of Gauchheit, Rother Heinerdarm and in England as Red Pimpernel and by botanists as *Anagallis Phoenecia*.<sup>7</sup>

The committee asked leave to present the thanks of the Senate to Valentine Kettering for his valuable and beneficent communication.

—Compiled from Senate Journal  
March 1802

Governor McKean signed a resolution "To present to Andrew Ellicott, Esquire for his use during the pleasure of the Legislature, the Telescope the property of the State."

—Senate Journal  
April 6, 1802

Yesterday the Legislature of this State adjourned after sitting 4 months. During their session they passed 93 Laws and 9 Resolutions.

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
April 17, 1802

Among the acts passed was one which marked the first step toward building of the Union Canal. It was "An act to enable the Governor of the Commonwealth to incorporate a company for opening a Canal and Lock-navigation between the rivers Schuylkill and Susquehanna by the waters of Tulpehocken, Quitapahilla and Swatara in the counties of Berks and Dauphin."<sup>8</sup>

One of the nine resolutions passed granted Charles Willson Peale "the use of certain parts of the Statehouse to display his Museum."<sup>9</sup>

### **Lancaster Almost Loses Title**

The question uppermost in the minds of the Pennsylvania legislators at Lancaster during the winter of 1802 was whether Lancaster would remain as the state capital or relinquish that honor in favor of Harrisburg or Columbia or Philadelphia or Carlisle. A vote in the Senate on March 5 decided the question in favor of continuing Lancaster as the temporary seat of government.

Some Plain Questions for the consideration of the inhabitants of the Borough of Lancaster.

Do you not love your own interests and your respectability?

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<sup>7</sup> The Reverend Henry Ernst Muhlenberg, pastor of Trinity Lutheran Congregation, was famed as a botanist.

<sup>8</sup> The Union Canal, which linked the rivers Schuylkill and Susquehanna, was completed in 1823.

<sup>9</sup> The Statehouse (Independence Hall) in Philadelphia.

Is it not a source of great profit to you and of Respectability to your Borough to have it the Seat of Government for the large and very wealthy State of Pennsylvania?

. . . Do the characters who compose our Government receive that respectful and hospitable treatment among you which their stations entitle them to? Do the wealthy People in the Borough, those who have it in their power, manifest a desire to afford, or to aid in procuring even comfortable accommodations for the Members of Government? Are not the doors of respectable private Families generally shut against them; so that the greater part of the Representatives are obliged to be exposed in their hours of recess, to the Profanity, the Obscenity, the Drunkenness, and all the bustle of a crowded Lancaster tavern?

And as for your streets, during most of the season when our Legislators are with you, are they not almost impassable? Would not a Stranger coming from the Turnpike conclude . . . that instead of turnpiking your streets . . . you had at great labour and expense, gathered into your principal streets, all the filth, mush and mire which your neighbouring swamps and mud holes could afford? . . . What gentleman with a decent carriage and spirited horse would dare make the attempt of passing through your main streets, during almost any period of the season above mentioned? . . . Is the Borough of Lancaster, the Capital of the most wealthy county of its size in the United States . . . so poor as not to be able to make its two main streets tolerably passable? . . . If you are in fact, so poor, the County, as a public body, will doubtless afford the necessary assistance. . . . Render the situation of our Governor, Legislators and Heads of Departments comfortable in Lancaster and they will not leave you. . . . Ye Lawyers, Physicians, Apothecaries, Printers, Tavernkeepers, Renters of Houses, Owners of Lots and Lands in Lancaster and its vicinity, Merchants, Mechanics, Market People, and Labourers of every description, are ye not all, some more and some less, benefited, I mean in your Purses by having the Seat of Government in your Borough? . . . Will you not adopt such measures as soon as they are practicable as will have a tendency to retain the Seat of Government amongst you . . . and thus promote the Respectability of your Borough and your own individual interest?

(Signed) A Friend to the Borough and County of Lancaster  
—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
January 20, 1802<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Barton presented certain Resolutions agreed upon at a meeting of the citizens of the Borough and County of Lancaster respecting the permanent Seat of Government being fixed at Lancaster, accompanied with Letters from William Hamilton, Esquire, Proprietor thereof, offering to grant certain ground mentioned in said Letters (and as laid down upon Plan therewith connected) situated in Lancaster, for the purpose of erecting a Statehouse and other public buildings thereon for the use of the State.

—Journal of the Senate  
February 11, 1802

Mr. Pearson presented a Paper, signed Samuel Wright; and the same was read as follows; to wit:

The Subscriber offers to convey in fee, for the use of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a Square, containing fifteen Lots of ground situated in the Town of Columbia, should the Legislature thereof, by law, fix on that

<sup>10</sup> The main streets of Lancaster were paved in 1803, and financed through a lottery.

place as the Seat of Government; and is ready to enter into contract and give any security which may be required of him in the Premises.

(Signed) Samuel Wright

—Journal of the Senate  
February 11, 1802

Mr. Orth presented a Memorial of the Subscribers, Commissioners of the County of Dauphin, stating that the Borough of Harrisburg . . . is considered by many citizens as a convenient situation for the seat of the State Government; and tendering . . . the Court House and Public Buildings in the said Borough for the Accommodation of the Legislature until such time as Public Buildings can be erected for their reception.

—Journal of the Senate  
February 12, 1802

Senate considered the motion relative to fixing the permanent Seat of Government of the Commonwealth, but the committee of the whole which had under consideration the motion, asked "leave to sit again". Granted.

—Journal of the Senate  
February 12, 1802

Yesterday, the Senate took up in committee of the whole the resolution for fixing the permanent seat of government. Philadelphia, Lancaster, Carlisle, Harrisburg and Columbia were proposed and negatived. The committee rose and had leave to sit again on Friday night.

—*Lancaster Journal*  
February 13, 1802

Yesterday the question relative to fixing the permanent Seat of Government was taken up in the Senate. The vote was first taken on Columbia, for which there appeared 11, Next on Philadelphia when 9 rose, Then on Lancaster which also had 9 and lastly on Harrisburg for which there were 14.

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
February 24, 1802

Committee of the Whole brought in for second time a report on fixing the permanent Seat of Government and by a vote of 15 yeas and 10 nays Report was adopted.

"Whereas the Books, Records, and Documents attached to the Government of this Commonwealth are through want of suitable buildings for their safe keeping greatly exposed to danger by fire and other accidents; For remedy whereof

Resolved: That a committee be appointed to prepare and report a Bill to fix the permanent Seat of Government at Harrisburg in the County of Dauphin and provide for erecting suitable Buildings. . . . before the first Tuesday in December which will be in the year A. D. One Thousand eight hundred and . . .

—Journal of the Senate  
February 24, 1802

While there was a determined effort on the part of some of the State leaders to take the capital away from Lancaster, there seemingly was not enough sentiment in favor of any other particular town to get enough votes to sway the balloting. Truly, it seems that most of the legislators of 1802 had a deep liking for Lancaster and its people, but were disappointed that Lancaster showed so little incentive to keep the town as the Pennsyl-



vania capital. This is borne out by a lengthy (2½ columns) letter signed by "A Pennsylvanian" which appeared in *The Intelligencer* on March 3, 1802. The writer spoke of the six places mentioned in the discussions relative to removal of the capital, then narrowed suitability down to three; Harrisburg, Lancaster and Columbia, and finally showed the desirability of retaining Lancaster as the seat of government.

... "Unless however a position on the margin of the Susquehanna should be deemed by the Legislature an indispensable requisite for the permanent seat. . . . The Borough of Lancaster possesses many advantages over Columbia itself. For notwithstanding this latter place is admitted to be one of the healthiest situations on the River; yet the salubrity of the air and water of Lancaster are of great and general notoriety, having been fully tested by the experience of the Inhabitants during more than seventy (70) years.

As the largest inland town within the United States, situated in the midst of a rich, plentiful and charming country; placed on the direct route of the great line of communication between the Eastern and Western Emporia of the State, passing through its most populous settlements; situated on the grand Turnpike Road that forms a most commodious communication between the two great rivers of Pennsylvania . . . as possessing all these peculiar advantages, Lancaster must in the estimation of all disinterested and thinking men who value the great, lasting and general interest of Pennsylvania, be pre-eminently entitled to the superiority over every other place in the State as a permanent Residence for its government.

It will not be denied that Columbia unites nearly all the advantages that Lancaster possesses; yet the infancy of the place as a town and the circumstances of no place on the banks of our rivers above tide-water being equally healthy with many inland situations, seem to render it, in all important particulars, a less eligible site for the great purpose in view."

Yesterday week, the Senate took up the bill for fixing the permanent seat of government of this Commonwealth at Harrisburg. Two several motions were made to strike out Harrisburg. The first was for the purpose of inserting Lancaster in lieu thereof; which was negatived 13 to 12. Columbia was then proposed and met the same fate. The question was then taken on the first section of the bill, as it had been reported, and negatived 13 to 12; so the bill was lost and the government remains at Lancaster.

—*Lancaster Journal*  
March 13, 1802

## **Benjamin Henry Latrobe Improves Navigation on Susquehanna**

One paragraph in Governor McKean's address at the opening of Legislature on December 5, 1801, concerned the improvement of navigation on the Susquehanna River. He stated that contracts had been entered into and that the work of improving navigation from Wright's Ferry to the Maryland line had been far advanced. The project to which he referred was completed in the spring of 1802, at which time he received a report from the engineer who finished the job. Totally forgotten by Pennsylvania historians, this work deserves consideration because of its importance at that time and also because it was under the direction of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, sometimes called the father of American architecture.

It was in September 1801 that the great task of improving Susquehanna navigation was undertaken jointly by the states of Maryland and Pennsyl-

vania. Then it was that Colonel Frederick Antes was engaged to survey the Pennsylvania section of the river and supervise the ensuing work. At the very beginning of the survey Colonel Antes died, whereupon his nephew, Benjamin Henry Latrobe, was entrusted with the completion of the work.<sup>11</sup>

A native of England, Benjamin Henry Latrobe arrived at Norfolk in 1796. Already an engineer of proven ability, his first job in America was to improve navigation on the Appomattox River in Virginia. Then in 1797 he completed the exterior of the Virginia State Capitol at Richmond. He came to Philadelphia in 1798, and received an assignment to draw plans for the building of the Bank of Pennsylvania which was subsequently built on Second Street; also was hired to plan Philadelphia's water system.<sup>12</sup>

Letters from Latrobe to Governor McKean and other individuals trace the progress of the engineering project on the Susquehanna.<sup>13</sup>

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To Governor McKean

Philadelphia, Oct. 17, 1801

"Agreeable to your verbal instructions and the sanctions you gave to the directions I had given since the death of Col. Antes, I have let to different contractors all the work in clearing the Susquehanna which can be accomplished by the appropriation of 10,000 dollars."

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To Governor McKean

Philadelphia, Jan. 15, 1802

"My very tedious indisposition which has been succeeded by that of every member of my family still detains me here. I daily flatter myself that I shall be able to leave Philadelphia for Lancaster.

In the meantime the accounts of the work from the Maryland line to Niel's point, a distance of about seven miles require settlement, as Mr. Shade has completed his work below the line and wished to return home.

Having viewed the work while surveying the work in the month of November, I can assure your Excellency of the fidelity with which it is executed, so as to form a very perfect navigation close inshore to join the Maryland improvement.

... The map is now ready completed and I hope will not disappoint your confidence in me."

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<sup>11</sup> Frederick Antes was a son of Henry Antes (1701-1755), well-known Moravian leader.

<sup>12</sup> Henry Antes had a daughter Ann Margaret, who married Henry Latrobe in Europe, where she had been sent to be educated. Henry Latrobe later became a Bishop of the Moravian Church. Benjamin Henry Latrobe, engineer and architect was a son of Bishop Henry and Ann Margaret Latrobe.

The work of B. Henry Latrobe, after his work on the Susquehanna, was preeminently in the field of architecture. At the request of President Jefferson, he drew the plans for the capitol building in Washington, and supervised its construction. He was the architect of the Cathedral in Baltimore, the tower of Christ Church in Alexandria, the courthouse in Hagerstown, and pavilions 3 and 5 at the University of Virginia. For a time, he was a partner of Robert Fulton, Robert Livingstone and Nicholas Roosevelt in the building of steamboats at Pittsburgh. Two monuments to his architectural ability still extant in Pennsylvania are the Old Custom House in Philadelphia and the central building (Old West) at Dickinson College, Carlisle.

Strickland, a later great engineer, worked with Latrobe on the Susquehanna project.

<sup>13</sup> The Latrobe letters were found among the Governor McKean papers at Harrisburg.

To Governor McKean

Philadelphia Jan. 17, 1802

"Since I had last the honor to request of your Excellency to grant a warrant for 1080.73 to Sebastian Shade, Esq., in order to the full discharge of the expenses of the work in clearing the Susquehanna from the Maryland line to Niel's point, I received the very flattering information that Messrs. Haldeman and Strickler took advantage of the fresh which about 3 weeks ago raised the river four feet to navigate the new channel from Columbia to the tide and that they have found it perfectly safe and easily kept.

The work at Burkhalter's ferry is now the only part which has not been completely paid for. The contractors have become impatient for their balance which amounts to about 2000 dollars. Of this sum whatever is deficient will be made up by the Susquehanna Company and I have already drawn upon them for 600 dollars. I am unwilling to further press them until it shall be known whether the Legislature are disposed to grant the further appropriation of 2000 dollars, recommended in your Excellency's communication to be granted for the repayment of their advance.

. . . I have endorsed the Blank Warrants to Geo. Stoner, a very respectable farmer living at Burkhalter's ferry—to whom the late Colonel Antes entrusted the resident superintendence of that part of the work, whenever he was absent at other parts of the river, who will see the money faithfully distributed agreeable to the directions I have sent to him."

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To Robert Gilmore, Esq.

Governor of the Susquehanna Company

Jan. 17, 1802

"In settling the account of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with Mr. Shade he has stated to me, that out of 1000 Dollars which I paid to him at Peach Bottom in November 1801, he made such payments to the contractors below the line as entirely to repay his former advance to us of 481.87 cents for which I have hitherto given you credit. His account also for clearing the river exceeds the sum of 1800 Dollars, on which I calculated. It is 1971.36 cents. I have paid the whole as I have not yet been able to reach Lancaster and shall not set off till Saturday next. I beg to state to you that should I contrary to expectations fail in obtaining the sum of 2000 Dollars required by The Governor to make up the deficiency of the last appropriation and to repay to you your advances, I shall be under the necessity of drawing upon the Susquehanna Company . . . as the deficiency which in the present state of our accounts amounts to 1250 dollars . . . It is however well ascertained that we shall not exceed the 1500 dollars originally mentioned."

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To "His Excellency, Thos. McKean

Governor of Pennsylvania

Jan. 27, 1802

"By the bearer, Mr. Stoner, I again take the liberty to trouble you with a Blank Warrant for 125 dollars, indorsed to him. I must at the same time mention to your Excellency that Mr. Stoner was placed in the situation in which he has continued since my appointment by the late Colonel Antes, and was upon his death recommended to me, by him as a man of strict probity and attention to business. He has amply deserved that character since I have known him and the works at Burkhalter's speak sufficiently for him. By their means the most dangerous part of the river next to Turkey Hill Falls—comprising Eshelman's Sluice, Burkhalter's falls, and the Point falls—is now among the safest parts of the navigation.

. . . I can walk about my business without pain, I still cannot get my wound to heal entirely and am detained, hoped every day to set off for Lancaster finding myself disappointed."

In these letters of Latrobe we are introduced to a Mr. Shade; and if you are curious concerning his identity, you may have that curiosity satisfied by reading a letter from Mr. Sebastian Shade himself as it appeared in the *Lancaster Intelligencer* on February 17, 1802.

To the Public

An act so interesting as the effecting of a water communication by the river Susquehanna, from its distant sources to the tide, is of such importance to the public . . . that I feel it a duty incumbent upon me . . . to lay before them all the information I have acquired, by my experience . . . as a navigator on the river for a period upward of 18 years.

It is with much satisfaction I inform the Public, that a safe and easy Navigation is made for Arks and Rafts . . . from Columbia to tide-water.

. . . In the accomplishment of this Channel from the Maryland line to Columbia, I acted in co-operation with Col. Frederick Antes who was appointed by his Excellency, the Governor of Pennsylvania under a law directing the expenditure of 10,000 Dollars for effecting a channel from Columbia to the Maryland line.

Mr. Latrobe on the part of Pennsylvania and Mr. Haudecouer on the part of Maryland, Gentlemen of much celebrity as Engineers chose a channel so as to combine the best Water with the easiest Navigation. . . .

The following is the route to be pursued by those navigating the River.

After leaving Columbia, keep the eastern side of the River close to shore down to Turkey Hill Falls. There is, in this distance, no obstruction. From the Turkey Hill Falls, passing through the Falls, you still keep in shore to Eshleman's Sluice. At this sluice, keep close in shore till you reach Burkholder's Ferry. From thence to the eastern shore, pass inside of a large Rock which lies in the first Falls below Burkholder's Ferry. From thence, keep the outside channel to the Indianstep Falls, which lie on the western shore. After passing the Indian steps, return to the eastern shore at a place called the neck. Then keep down the eastern shore to McCall's Ferry. From thence keep the midway of the River and pass between the Bear Islands and the eastern shore till you reach the lower end of these Islands. Then approach the eastern shore and keep down the new channel close in shore to Peach Bottom Ferry.

At Peach Bottom you have two points in view called Williamson's Point and Frazier's Point, projecting from the eastern side of the river. Keeping the eastern side, close in shore pass these points, as near as you can. After passing the last of them, still keeping close in shore, you will observe a Flag on a pole, fixed in rock, right ahead nearly joining the west side of Loves Island at the Head of the Canal.

Sebastian Shade

Lancaster, Feb. 10, 1802

### An Unfriendly River

The official report of the Susquehanna Navigation project, written by the hand of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, was duly presented to Governor McKean, and printed in full in *The Intelligencer* of April 7, 1802.

To his Excellency Thomas McKean

Governor of Pennsylvania

Sir,

In order to improve the Navigation of the river Susquehanna within the State of Pennsylvania, by such gradual means, as the appropriation of the Legislature would permit and by a concert with the Susquehanna Company of Maryland, to render the improvement effectual to tidewater, I received your Excellency's instructions to repair to the river, to make a complete survey of the same below Columbia; and in concert with the late Colonel

Antes to so direct the work within Pennsylvania that the most material obstructions might be removed, should the limitations to expenditure prevent the completion of a perfect navigation this season.

The death of Colonel Antes soon after my arrival at Columbia deprived the State and myself of his very extraordinary talents and integrity. He however viewed the river from the tide to Columbia, jointly with Sebastian Shade, Esq., and lived long enough to communicate his general ideas upon the state of its bed and its future improvement. . . .

After my uncle's death, he (Shade) was so obliging as to view once more with me, those parts of the river, of which the Navigation was the most difficult. He also undertook to see those works performed. . . .

I have executed a complete and I believe accurate Survey and Map of the River. . . .

As far as it has been carried, the work is part of a straight clear, inshore channel. . . .

The most formidable obstruction in Pennsylvania was perhaps Turkey Hill Falls. The river after spreading to the width of nearly two miles suddenly contracts itself on breaking through the mountains to the width of 60 chains<sup>14</sup> or  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. . . . I should recommend that, at any future appropriation, a portion should be applied to open Turkey Hill Falls entirely, so as to leave nothing, in passing them, to extraordinary skill and management.

Below Turkey Hill, the next most dangerous rapid is called Eshleman's Sluice. It is situated half a mile below the mouth of Conestoga. There was no possibility of avoiding this sluice, without making an entirely new channel to the point Falls . . . so as to render that very dangerous part of the river safe to Indian Steps. . . .

No obstructions occur below the Indian Steps which may not be easily avoided, till you arrive at the foot of Bear Islands. For although Culley's Falls are among the roughest parts of the river, I cannot learn that any wrecks have happened there. . . .

It will appear, by what I have herein reported to your Excellency, that a navigation, perfectly safe, in comparison to what it has hitherto been, is already effected from Columbia to tidewater. But much remains to be done before this unfriendly River can be made fit for the common purposes of a constant intercourse between the country, so immense in extent and population which it waters and the commercial cities of the Atlantic. . . .

I comply with your desire in suggesting what ought to be done.

1. To complete the inshore channel, on the Eastern side, from the line to Columbia and thence to the Chickisalunga Rocks.

2. To make a towing path for horses; . . . From the mouth of Conestoga to Turkey Hill, From the foot of Bear's Islands to Fulton's Ferry, From Columbia to Chickisalunga Rocks, From the Maryland line to the foot of Bear Islands, from Fulton's Ferry to the mouth of Conestoga, and from Turkeyhill to the falls above Columbia. . . .

3. To render the inshore channel navigable in at least two feet of water at all seasons, either by deepening the bed of the river or by erecting Wing-dams at proper places, to throw in the stream.

4. To continue the towing paths, where omitted.

. . . I beg leave to add, that upon every subject contained in my Report and the Appendix, I have made use of the information of Mr. Shade, and of every experienced pilot whom I could meet with. . . .

I am, with the most perfect esteem

Your Excellency's

Obedient and faithful Servant

B. Henry Latrobe

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<sup>14</sup> A Surveyor's Chain (Gunter's Chain) consists of 100 links, each link measuring 7.92 inches.

It seems necessary to call attention to one sentence in the foregoing Latrobe report, namely that which refers to a map which he had prepared and which accompanied the report. It is of record that the map as well as the report was presented to the Legislature by Secretary Thompson on behalf of Governor McKean. As written in the hand of Latrobe, the report is still preserved in the Division of Public Records at Harrisburg. The map, however, left Pennsylvania and met destruction in the Nation's Capitol. Fortunately, B. Henry Latrobe made a facsimile of the original map but only by reading Latrobe's own words on the second map have we learned the story of the first map and how it came to be destroyed.

The facsimile map is today owned by the Maryland Historical Society, and is a valued possession in their building in Baltimore. It came to them from The Library Company of Baltimore, having been presented by Latrobe on January 12, 1817, with the inscription, "This duplicate of the Map of the Susquehanna, formerly inscribed to his Exc. Thos. McKean is respectfully presented by B. Henry Latrobe."

The map which was made in sections on heavy cloth has since been joined and is fifteen feet in length. It is very accurately and beautifully executed. On each portion of the facsimile appear Latrobe's notes concerning the navigation project while on the central section one may read exactly what occurred to the first map which Latrobe presented to Governor McKean.

"The map, of which this is a facsimile, was sent by Thos. McKean, then governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to the Legislature, together with the annexed report. It was hung up in the House of Representatives at Lancaster, until the removal of the seat of government to Harrisburg. When the subject of internal improvement by roads and canals was before Congress in 180( ) it was sent to Washington and remained probably among the records of the House of Representatives U. S. until it was destroyed in their general destruction by the British in 1814."

(Signed) B. Henry Latrobe.<sup>15</sup>

Latrobe's work on the Susquehanna very naturally led him to be interested in the projected canal to connect the Chesapeake and Delaware bays. In a twelve-page letter to President Thomas Jefferson on March 27, 1802, he calls the matter of the Delaware and Chesapeake Canal "a subject that at present agitates the public mind in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and the State of Delaware." His particular aim at the time was to get funds to the amount of \$250,000 to capitalize a company to go forward with the work. On the Susquehanna project, Latrobe had some little trouble in getting money from Pennsylvania to finish his job, and so to Thomas Jefferson, he gave this very low appraisal of the Pennsylvania legislature. "But from the Legislature of Pennsylvania nothing is to be expected—not even an assent to borrow of one of the banks in our city who are ready to lend the whole capital at 6 percent, redeemable only by the excess of the produce of the tolls beyond the interest. We have been very unfortunate in the choice of

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<sup>15</sup> The Pennsylvania Historical Commission graciously presented to the author a photostat of the Latrobe map, which has been deposited in the Lancaster County Historical Society.



**BENJAMIN HENRY LATROBE** — Famous Engineer and Architect who supervised the work of improving Susquehanna Navigation, 1801-1802.  
*Courtesy of Library of Congress.*

our representatives for some years past, and men of sense seem to be ineligible in the unanimous opinion of the Majority."<sup>16</sup>

## Spring and Summer in Lancaster 1802

True republicanism is gaining ground in Pennsylvania. In the county of Lancaster, we can state from the most positive evidence, that nearly all the moderately, well-meaning men among the democrats are disgusted with the late public measures. They . . . begin to feel that the government is badly administered and that many of the public officers are much more haughtier and aristocratic than were their predecessors.

—*Lancaster Journal*

April 17, 1802

Report on a meeting of Democrats. There were 87 Democrats in the last legislature and on the hot night of the meeting, 68 were in town—the others having deserted their posts. Of these 68, there were only 52 attended at the house of Mr. Leonard Eicholtz.

After a great deal of discussion, drilling and persuasion, the question was taken, when 43 yeas were given immediately for McKean and 3 more after some hesitation. Five absolutely refused to give any decision, and the other . . . declared his opposition in terms bold and independent.

—*Lancaster Journal*

May 1, 1802

Died, after a short illness, Robert McKean, Esq., son of the Governor of this Commonwealth; a Gentleman whose personal worth and integrity rendered him dear to his particular Friends and an ornament to the community of which he was a member. Mr. McKean has been for years, the object of party hatred; though perhaps no man was less disposed to the exercise of persecution or revenge . . . The honesty of his heart appeared to suffer from disquiet at the malignity of his fellow creatures; and perhaps more than any other cause, contributed to prepare him for a too early decay.<sup>17</sup>

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*

June 23, 1802

The democratic citizens of the borough of Lancaster are requested to meet at the house of Leonard Eicholtz on Saturday, the 3rd of July to nominate a committee for the borough.

—*Lancaster Journal*

July 3, 1802

Lancaster, July 6, 1802

Received of James Trimble, the sum of twenty dollars in part of the sum of thirty seven dollars for which I have agreed to carry five boxes of laws and journals to the Counties of Chester and Delaware, City and County of Philadelphia, and County of Bucks.

(Signed) John Morrison

Public Records of  
Pennsylvania

Lancaster, July 7, 1802

Received of James Trimble, the sum of two dollars and twenty five cents for the carriage of a box from the Borough of Lancaster to the City

<sup>16</sup> Letter in the Library of Congress.

<sup>17</sup> Robert McKean, age 36, was the second son of Thomas and Mary Borden McKean.



of Washington containing eight copies of the fourth volume of Laws of this Commonwealth, one for the Sec. of State of the United States, one for the Attorney General of the United States, one for the Clerk of the Senate and one for the Clerk of the House of Representatives of the United States, and one for each of the Executives of the States of Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee.

(Signed) Henry Slaymaker  
Public Records of  
Pennsylvania

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On Monday last the Anniversary of the Independence of North America was celebrated at the Good Spring on the Conestoga, near the Seat of Government.

The principal Officers of Government, a number of the most respectable Citizens and the Republican Blues commanded by Captain Dickson, having met, and a Dinner being provided by Mr. Kindig, the Company dined together in the utmost harmony and conviviality.

The morning had been hailed from a piece of Artillery in front of Franklin College. In the evening, the Company formed (and) marched to Franklin College where an Evening Gun was fired.

The Cap of Liberty was then guarded to the dwelling of the President and there deposited.

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
July 7, 1802

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On Monday last, 60 Federal Republicans met at Mr. Smith's (late Graffs) spring, where in commemoration of American Independence they partook of an excellent dinner and spent the day in "festive harmony". 16 Toasts were drunk and after General Hand retired, (the following toast)

"May the county of Lancaster never want a Hand—either as a physician, a gentleman or a soldier."

—*Lancaster Journal*  
July 10, 1802

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We are informed that Gen. Muhlenberg had declared if it was the wish of his friends he would run for Governor of Pennsylvania at the next election.

—*Lancaster Journal*  
July 24, 1802

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I assert that Mr. Muhlenberg was presented with the office of Collector in consideration of declining a competition with Mr. McKean; because it was well known that he was the person most likely to succeed against the present Governor.

From a letter to the "Gazette of the United States", signed by "A Pennsylvania Elector"  
—*Lancaster Journal*  
August 28, 1802

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#### LETTER FROM GOVERNOR MCKEAN TO HIS WIFE SARAH

Lancaster, August 11, 1802

I arrived here on Monday evening, a little sunburned and fatigued. Thomas was more so, and in a fever, but it subsided in the morning; he lodges and boards at Mrs. Mussers, you and I are to live at the Secretaries.

The sooner you come here the better—bring a quarter of a hundred Lemons with you and don't forget the Porter.

## Thomas McKean Gets a Second Term as Governor

Early in September 1802, the complete state tickets of the two parties were announced, and again as three years previous, Thomas McKean was the choice of the Democratic Republicans for the office of Governor and James Ross was the candidate of the Federalists. Several items from the rival Lancaster newspapers will indicate that party feeling was again running high in the state capital. Quoting a statement in *The Journal*, i. e., "It is our peculiar duty to attend to our local interests and to endeavour to preserve the Offices of Government among us." *The Intelligencer* on September 15 commented as follows:

"How far the Federalists act up to their peculiar duty in this respect, may be seen by inspecting their ticket. For representatives in the State Legislature, they have taken two candidates from the Borough, one of whom was notoriously opposed to removing the Seat of Government from Philadelphia to this Place . . . Surely John Hubley will not deny this. Will the man who was opposed to the removal of the Seat of Government to Lancaster also oppose its removal hence? If he does, it will be Federal consistency."<sup>18</sup>

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Shortly before last year's election we mentioned to several of the principal democrats in Lancaster that we should not make any personal remarks on the democratic candidates unless an attack was commenced on some of the gentlemen named in the Federal ticket. . . . Our determination on this point was known to citizen Dickson and yet he was so incautious as to produce the ruin of some of his own friends.

He is verging on a similar line of conduct precedent to the ensuing election and has published a malicious lie against one of the Federal candidates. . . . We invite him to proceed in this way and prove completely that abuse from his pen is the most distinguished praise. We also refer him to an examination of the democratic ticket. . . . he will find deism, insanity, dishonesty, handsomely triplicated with bigotry, stupidity and malignity. If necessary, we will cheerfully assist his researches.

—*Lancaster Journal*  
September 25, 1802

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Dickson, in his last week's paper, endeavoured to lessen the character of Mr. H. (Hubley) by saying he was opposed to the removal of the Seat of Government. . . . Mr. H. was to be sure at first opposed to a temporary removal (which perhaps after a residence of one winter would have left us nothing but dear markets and high rents) but as a permanent seat or as a residence of the Legislature for a number of years, Mr. H. has been a decided advocate for the borough of Lancaster.

—*Lancaster Journal*  
September 25, 1802

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However, the electorate sensed that there was no serious charge that could be brought against Thomas McKean in his administration of the affairs of the Commonwealth; and the results of the election on October 12, 1802, indicated this feeling. When the votes were counted, it was found that McKean had carried Lancaster County with a majority of seven hundred votes which was highly satisfactory to the Democratic Republicans or the

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<sup>18</sup> John Hubley was the father-in-law of William Hamilton, owner and editor of the *Lancaster Journal*.

Whigs as they were now being called; for be it remembered that three years before McKean lost the county by more than one thousand votes. In reporting the election, *The Intelligencer* gave the official vote as 2911 for the Whigs or Republicans and 2183 for the Tory party or the Federalists. Throughout the state, McKean polled 44,390 votes out of a total of 59,889. Interest in the election seemingly was not as great as it had been when McKean was elected for his first time three years before, when more than 70,000 Pennsylvanians trudged to the polls.

On October 18, which was six days after the election, Governor McKean with his wife were again cordially received by officials and friends when they arrived in Lancaster.

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His Excellency, Governor McKean and his lady arrived here on Monday last. Upon the information of their approach to the Town, the Officers of Government, the Officers of Militia in uniform, attended by a respectable number of citizens, rode out to escort them in. The Volunteer Company, commanded by Capt. Dickson, with some hundred of citizens on foot, went out also to join the escort. At the Conestoga, a procession was formed, the Volunteers in front of The Governor's carriage; the Officers of Government immediately after it; the Officers of Militia after these; and the Citizens in the rear. Thus ranged, they marched in perfect order and joyfulness; while their entrance into town was announced by seven discharges from a piece of artillery characteristic of the 700 Majority lately obtained in this County.

The concourse of citizens was very great; and all seemed to vie with each other in paying respect to the Man, who has been so instrumental to preserve their Liberties, and promote their Happiness. Instead of being the stare of curiosity, excited by a novel experience, it was the effusions of the heart, grateful for the virtuous, wise and patriotic Governor, that characterized this assemblage of citizens. The recollection of his Services, combined with his re-election to the Chair of State, produced this effusion of joy; than which we have never seen anything more sincere; nor any procession of the kind more orderly.

His Excellency was very polite and attentive to all who accosted him. He partook of the feelings which the Triumph of Liberty and Republicanism inspired around.

After attending the Governor to his Lodgings, at the Secretary of State's, this large assembly of citizens dispersed, in order and tranquility, in joy and cheerfulness.

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
October 20, 1802

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On Tuesday last, the re-election of the Governor having become certain, and it being understood that he intended to go to the City within a few days, the Citizens of the Borough determined to give him a public dinner on the occasion. There were present upward of 50 Republicans. The dinner at Mr. Gonter's was elegant and the wine was excellent. On no former occasion was there a greater degree of harmony and conviviality. You saw the heart of every man on his face: There was nothing to conceal. It is impossible that the heart of the Governor should not have been warmed with the evidence, so strongly shown, of the People's confidence in him, and affection for him.

(Sixteen arranged toasts were given.)

About sunset the Governor retired, and the President gave:

Our Governor: May he belong solely to Pennsylvania, until our sister States shall claim a share in him.

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
November 2, 1802

### Prominent Men Depart This Life

Two men, active in the life of Lancaster borough passed away in the month of September 1802. One of them was Robert Dickson, co-editor of the *Lancaster Intelligencer* and a prominent Republican. The other was General Hand, esteemed physician of Lancaster and one-time member of General Washington's staff. There is no record that Governor McKean attended either the obsequies of his supporter, Robert Dickson, or of his political enemy and Revolutionary associate, Edward Hand.

DIED, on the 12th inst, of a cancer in his groin, at Newtown, Bucks County, whither he had gone for a cure, Robert Dickson, one of the editors of this paper, in the 37th year of his age; and on Tuesday following, his Remains were interred in the Presbyterian Burial ground of that place.

... Benevolent and amiable through life, he lived and died without reproach. His Duty to his God was always his nearest concern; and in the hope of a glorious Immortality he welcomed his approaching end in peace and contentment.

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
September 22, 1802

DIED, after a few hours sickness of a cholera morbus, on the 4th Inst. at his Seat on the Conestoga, in the vicinity of this borough, Gen. Edward Hand, in the 58th year of his age, and his remains were interred the following day in the Episcopal Burial-ground in the Borough of Lancaster, attended by his weeping Relatives, and a crowd of sympathizing Friends.

... Affectionate as a Husband, tender as a Parent, and useful as a Physician and Citizen, he has left a disconsolate widow, and six children to bewail his decease. Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit.

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
September 8, 1802

### Lancaster Continues to be Gun-Making Center

That Lancaster riflemakers were still very active in 1801 and 1802 is discerned by reading the records at Harrisburg. A few references to the skilled Lancaster artisans in that field during the period we are considering may well be cited at this time.

From 1797 to 1802, Owen Evans of Lancaster made 1100 stands of muskets for the Commonwealth. On April 17, 1801, a contract was signed between Governor McKean and Jacob Haeffer of Lancaster for the latter to make 500 stands of guns at eleven dollars each. That contract was completed in October of 1802. Also on April 17, 1801, Governor McKean contracted with Henry Dehuff of Lancaster to make 500 stands at eleven dollars each, and this job was finished on August 1, 1802.<sup>19</sup>

The contracts referred to in the preceding paragraph all contain the same specifications and are identical with the following contract:

<sup>19</sup> Jacob Deckert and Matthew Llewellyn of Lancaster also made 1000 stands of Musquets in this same period.

“ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT” Made the 17th day of April 1801 between Thomas McKean, Governor and Peter Brand of the Borough and County of Lancaster.

To make 500 stands of arms to these specifications . . . to be of the fashion or pattern of the French Charleville Musquet. The length of each barrel to be three feet eight inches and to receive a ball of the size of eighteen to the pound; each barrel to undergo the same degree of proof as is now in use for the proof on those made for the service of the United States, and to be stamped or marked near the breech with the letters C. P. the locks to be upon the best construction, double bridled on a flat plate and marked with the letters aforesaid, start the mounting Iron with bands and swivels, and spring to each band; the ram rods to be of well tempered steel; the bayonets to be fifteen inches in the blade, made of steel well tempered and polished; the stock to be made of well seasoned walnut; the length of the butt of the Musquet to be fifteen and a half inches from the breech end of the barrel to the heel plate; the side pins, the breech pins and the trigger to be case hardened, the weight of the Musquet and Bayonet thus completed, not to exceed eleven pounds.”

### **The Assembly Convenes—Governor McKean Takes Oath**

This day The Legislature are to meet. From the heavy rain and the badness of the roads, it is probable there may not be a quorum in each house before to-morrow.

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
December 7, 1802

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On Tuesday last the Legislature assembled in this Borough; and a Quorum of each House appearing, proceeded to choose their speakers; when Samuel Maclay, Esq., was unanimously re-elected by the Senate; and Isaac Weaver, Esq., by the House of Representatives.

On Thursday the House of Representatives re-elected Matthew Huston, Esq., their Clerk, who appointed Abner Webb, as his Assistant; which was approved by the House; Joseph Frey was unanimously chosen Sergeant-at-Arms; and Henry Lechler was duly elected Doorkeeper.

On Friday, the Senate appointed William Hamilton, Printer of their Journal and Bills, in the English language; and Snyder and Ritter, Printers of their German Journals.

The House of Representatives appointed George Helmbold, Printer of their English Journal; Meyer and Grimler, Printers of their Bills; and Snyder and Ritter, Printers of their German Journals.

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
December 14, 1802

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On Saturday, December 11, Governor McKean met both Houses in the Representatives Chamber on the first floor of the Lancaster County Court-house and delivered an address, as was customary at the opening of Legislature.

Mindful that he had signed a bill in March to provide for the free education of poor children, he suggested to the legislators that they would “doubtless endeavour to diffuse the blessings of Education among the Poor.” “The safety of the Records and Papers of the Land, the Rolls-Office, and other Public Offices, is an object of great importance,” said McKean. “But,” continued he, “no subject is more entitled to a liberal share of legislative patronage than the organization, equipment and discipline of the Militia.”

He suggested that "provisions would occur to the legislators which would make it possible to enjoy the advantages of the patriotic militia of Pennsylvania."

Ten days following his address to the lawmakers, Thomas McKean took for a second time the oath of office as Governor of the Commonwealth. If there was any fanfare or celebration to mark the beginning of this second term of McKean, the newspapers of the day failed to record such an inaugural celebration. A Proclamation dated December 21, 1802, stated that on that day "in the Borough of Lancaster, the returns of the late election were opened and published, and that upon counting the votes by a Teller appointed from each House, it appeared that Thomas McKean had a majority of votes; whereupon the said Thomas McKean was declared to be duly elected Governor of the said Commonwealth; and having first taken the oath of office, was, accordingly . . . proclaimed Governor thereof."

Also on that same day, December 21, the Legislature elected a successor to United States Senator James Ross, the same who a few months before had run a losing race a second time for the chair of Governor.

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"On Wednesday last the Legislature elected a Senator to represent the State in Congress, in the room of James Ross. The candidates being all Republicans, the votes were

For Samuel Maclay .....	66
Isaac Weaver .....	28
William Maclay .....	11
— <i>Lancaster Intelligencer</i>	
December 21, 1802	

### **Andrew Ellicott and a Famous Telescope**

Through searching the State archives at Harrisburg and perusing the Ellicott papers in the Library of Congress, a most interesting story about a famous telescope has come to light. It begins with the following legislative resolution, already cited.<sup>20</sup>

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"Governor McKean signed a resolution "to present to Andrew Ellicott, Esquire, for his use during the pleasure of the Legislature, the Telescope the property of the State."

—*Senate Journal*  
April 6, 1802

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The engrossed resolution which was presented to Secretary of the Land Office Ellicott and which is now in the Library of Congress gives the additional information that the General Assembly "presents to Andrew Ellicott, the Telescope purchased in the year 1769, with all the apparatus, put in complete repair out of the expenses of the Commonwealth."

Even more informative is a memorandum written by Ellicott himself which gives in brief the history of the instrument.

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<sup>20</sup> See "Andrew Ellicott, Surveyor of the Capital of Our Nation," by M. Luther Heisey, L. C. H. S., Vol. 54, p. 1.

Lancaster, May 3, 1802

"The Telescope was imported by the Province of Pennsylvania for observing the Transit of Venus in the year 1769. After that observation it stood for several years in a small wooden building in the State House yard. It was afterwards used for the last time at Wilmington on the Delaware in the year 1782 for the purpose of determining the length of five degrees of Longitude. Since that time it has been neglected and is now rendered entirely useless and can only be repaired by sending it to London."

By this time, you have certainly realized that this telescope was indeed the one which figured in the observation of the Transit of Venus in 1769, directed by David Rittenhouse. In that same year, the American Philosophical Society built in the State House yard in Philadelphia an observatory which was back of its own building, and therefore also to the rear of the State House itself. In this observatory was placed the telescope that had been specially imported to observe the transit which occurs at intervals of one hundred and twenty-five years.

But before Andrew Ellicott, mathematician and astronomer, could eventually set up the state telescope at his home on Prince Street in Lancaster, much correspondence concerning the instrument was carried on. For a time Ellicott despaired of ever having the telescope in his possession.<sup>21</sup>

On April 25, 1802, he made his first request to his good friend, John Vaughan, fellow member of the Philosophical Society, to "pack up the telescope and send it to London." He told him that "The telescope and its appendages are at the University."

One day later, April 26, Robert Patterson, Vice-President of the Philosophical Society, wrote to Ellicott and asked for "an authenticated copy of the resolution of Legislature presenting the telescope." We may be sure that Ellicott complied promptly with the request, and that he expected that it would mean the shipment of the instrument to London without delay.<sup>22</sup>

Certainly it was with an elated feeling that he penned this letter to his very close scientific friend, President Thomas Jefferson.

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ANDREW ELICOTT TO THOMAS JEFFERSON

Lancaster, May 11, 1802

... I expect to get my transit instrument set up in three or four weeks, by which I shall be able to increase the number and value of my observations.

... The Legislature of this Commonwealth has complimented me with the use of the large reflecting Telescope which was imported for the purpose of observing the Transit of Venus in the year 1769. It is much the best instrument of its kind upon this continent and is sent to London to be put in complete repair at public expense.

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The above was written before an unexpected hitch occurred in the procedure of getting the instrument off to London. Two letters of Ellicott written in May inform us of the reason for the delay.

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<sup>21</sup> Andrew Ellicott lived on the southeast corner of North Prince and Marion streets. His home is still standing.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Patterson, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Pennsylvania, was appointed Director of the Mint in 1805; in 1819 was elected President of the Philosophical Society.

ELLCOTT TO JOHN VAUGHAN

Lancaster, May 22, 1802

... The objection of the Trustees of the University to giving up the Telescope is unexpected. ... Mr. Rittenhouse believed the Telescope to be the property of the State and told me so, at the time he observed the eclipse of the Sun with it and which is the last one he has recorded.

ELLCOTT TO BENJAMIN RUSH

Lancaster, May 21, 1802

... Altho the wish and intention of our Legislature has been manifested by a public act, I do nevertheless, from an aversion to everything which has the appearance of controversy, waive all claim to the use of the instrument in question.

The objections of the University of Pennsylvania were of course overcome and the telescope was then shipped away to London for the needed repairs. When, in the month of December, it again reached Philadelphia, John Vaughan lost no time in informing Andrew Ellicott.

J. VAUGHAN TO ANDREW ELLCOTT

Philadelphia, Dec. 21, 1802

I have the pleasure to inform you that The Telescope is at length arrived. ... It therefore becomes necessary to obtain an order from the Governor, as I am held responsible at present to the State. I have written to him and request you to call on him.

ANDREW ELLCOTT TO JOHN VAUGHAN

Lancaster, Dec. 27, 1802

I am much pleased to hear of the arrival of the Telescope for which the Governor informed me he would immediately pass the order. For forwarding the instrument to this place, the common road wagon will be much preferable to the Stage. The latter from the rapidity with which it moves over the rough turnpike jolts too much for the conveyance of so delicate an instrument. I wish it as early as possible.

ANDREW ELLCOTT TO ROBERT PATTERSON, VICE-PRESIDENT OF  
THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Lancaster, Jan. 29, 1803

The Telescope has arrived in good order, but there are yet wanting one or two small mirrors and as many eye pieces. ... Next week I shall commence another course of observations. No pains shall be spared to make them as interesting as the last communication to the society.

On April 6, 1803, the Treasurer of the Commonwealth paid to Andrew Ellicott for expenses incurred by John Vaughan in sending the telescope to England for repairs, the sum of \$67.03.<sup>23</sup>

**January 1803 Governor McKean Wins Acclaim**

Two weeks after Thomas McKean began his second term as governor, Andrew Ellicott wrote to his brother in Bucks County, and gave him an up-to-date account of the Republican administration at Lancaster.

<sup>23</sup> John Vaughan, the Librarian of the Philosophical Society. Of him it was written, "His activities in behalf of the best objects were unwearied."



. . . The firmness, energy and decision of Governor McKean have borne down all opposition and the business of government is so well managed, that the Federalists begin openly to applaud his conduct, and in my opinion, republicanism is more indebted to him than to Mr. Jefferson. Our Legislature last winter was economy minded, and had it not been for a few dispassionate members, government would have been prostrated to make room for the goddess of meanness. . . . Mr. McKean is a friend to liberal salaries, but the officers must do their duty and close the publick accounts quarterly or retire. This regulation has instituted such order in every department of the government that the whole goes on like a well regulated piece of machinery.

### Portsmouth, N. H., Suffers a Great Fire—Lancaster Helps

It was on December 26, 1802, that a terrific fire laid waste almost the entire town of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Immediately, sympathetic communities along the Atlantic seaboard dispatched money and food to the unfortunate citizens of the New England town. In Lancaster, on January 11, one who signed his communication to *The Intelligencer* "Humanity" said, "surely the benevolent citizens of Lancaster will not be the last in contributing their proportion. Let it not be said that at the Seat of Government of the wealthiest State in the Union, the citizens were devoid of Humanity."

Later items from *The Intelligencer* indicate to what extent the citizens of Lancaster and the members of the Legislature responded to the appeal to help stricken Portsmouth.

We learn with pleasure that the Members of the Legislature have collected among themselves and paid over for the Relief of the Sufferers at Portsmouth, upwards of 300 Dollars. This, we hope will induce the People of Lancaster generally to attend the following invitation

(Invitation was to attend meeting at house of George Fisher to adopt measures to afford assistance.)

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
February 8, 1803

It gives us pleasure to state the result of the contributions in this Borough to alleviate the sufferings of the unhappy People of Portsmouth. The whole sum collected on this occasion is

From members of Legislature	\$335
From the Citizens	200

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
March 29, 1803

### A Judge Is Impeached In Lancaster

A learned man was Alexander Addison, who emigrated from Scotland to Pennsylvania in 1758. An able Presbyterian preacher in the town of Washington, he forsook the ministry for the law and was first appointed President Judge in western Pennsylvania in 1791. His wide legal knowledge was evidenced in his authorship of "Addison's Reports," once considered as highly authoritative. However, on two occasions in March and June, 1801, Judge Addison apparently lost sight of legal ethics and treated a fellow judge—Judge Lucas—in an unfair and disrespectful manner.

The report of the behaviour of Judge Addison reached the State Senate, sitting in Lancaster in 1802; and on April 14, of that year, the Senate of Pennsylvania adopted the following resolution: "Resolved that the Senate will proceed on the second Tuesday in December next to the Trial of Alexander Addison, President of the Courts of the Fifth District of Pennsylvania."

... On motion of Mr. Findley, it was resolved that A. Addison be called and admitted to plead to the Charges exhibited against him. Mr. Addison appeared, and pleaded to the charges generally *not guilty*, as in manner and form set forth against him.

—Senate Journal  
Dec. 22, 1803

All last week has been taken up in trying the articles of impeachment against Mr. Addison. The two first days of the week were spent in hearing the testimony. Those experienced in Courts of Law . . . unite in declaring they never knew any charge or Allegations more accurately proven. . . .

After the testimony was closed, Mr. Dallas addressed the Senate in a very able and eloquent speech, which lasted about seven hours. He endeavoured to establish . . . that the Offense with which Mr. Addison was charged, was a High Misdemeanor and Impeachable.<sup>24</sup>

Mr. Addison, also, in a very able and eloquent manner, took up both Friday and Saturday in his defense. In which he endeavoured to prove, that it was a question of right and not an Offense . . . that not being an Offense, it was not impeachable.

The Attorney-General (Joseph B. McKean) began His reply to Mr. Addison yesterday morning, and finished last night. As far as we have attended during his Reply, he discussed the subject with great clearness and accuracy. It is not becoming for us to give an opinion on the merits of the Impeachment, at this state of the Business. We have given this Statement to gratify the curiosity of our Country subscribers, and trust it is an impartial one.

—Lancaster Intelligencer  
January 25, 1803

On Thursday last, The House of Representatives being in Committee of the Whole, for that purpose, and the Members of the Senate being introduced, The Speaker of that Body pronounced *Sentence* upon Judge Addison as follows:

"That Alexander Addison, . . . Shall be, and is, removed from his office . . . ; and also is disqualified to hold and exercise the Office of Judge, in any Court of Law within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."

—Lancaster Intelligencer  
February 1, 1803

### Jacob Carpenter Re-elected State Treasurer—Dies Month Later

On Tuesday, January 11, the Legislature of the state proceeded to the election of a treasurer; when Jacob Carpenter was unanimously re-elected. For Jacob Carpenter, revered Lancaster citizen, this meant the beginning of a third term in the office of treasurer; but he was not to have the privilege of serving his state very long after re-election. On February 15,

<sup>24</sup> Alexander J. Dallas, Attorney for the United States in the eastern district of Pennsylvania. He was Secretary of the Treasury during part of President Madison's term.



THE OLD CITY HALL and THE MASONIC HALL.

The Surveyor General and the Controller General of Pennsylvania maintained their offices here when Lancaster was the Seat of Government of Pennsylvania.

there appeared the following sad notice in *The Intelligencer*, telling of his death.

DIED, of a consumption, in this Borough, on the 13th Instant, Jacob Carpenter, Esq., late Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in the 36th year of his age; and his remains will be taken this day from his late dwelling, at 10 a.m. and deposited in the family burying-ground, on his Brother's Farm, near Strasburg, in this county.

In deploring the loss his disconsolate widow and only child sustain in his death, his Friends and Acquaintances, who were numerous, will lament that society is deprived of one of its brightest ornaments; the Individual, of a benefactor; and his Country of a zealous and able Defender. . . . A Whig in principle, a Philosopher in intellect, and a Patriot in practice; his Country appreciated his merits and raised him to the Office of Treasurer of The Commonwealth. . . . Well knowing, that the most acceptable Offering to his God was an upright heart, every returning day he gave a successive example of his Faith, by an obedience to his eternal precepts, in performing those relative duties by which we are all mutually connected, for our mutual good. The citizens of this Borough to whose wants he was always alive, to whose calls he was ever attentive, . . . will frequently regret his decease.

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Yesterday at 12 o'clock, both Houses of the Legislature met in the Senate Chamber, to choose a Treasurer of this Commonwealth, in the place of Jacob Carpenter deceased, for the remainder of the term for which he was elected. The Candidates were Isaac Weaver, Speaker of the House of Representatives and Jacob Martin, the Representative of the Widow and Child of the Deceased. Mr. Weaver had 59 votes and Mr. Martin 44. It was considered by many, that the Widow and Child had an equitable claim upon the emoluments of the office; and such a tribute was justly due to the merits of the deceased. But the Speaker of the House, in his strides after office, and cupidity for wealth, was not ashamed to be her competitor.

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*

March 1, 1803

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As successor to Isaac Weaver, Speaker of the House, that body in regular session on Tuesday, March 1, unanimously elected Hon. Simon Snyder, of Selinsgrove in Northumberland County, to sit in the Speaker's chair for the remainder of the session. This was a signal honor for politically ambitious Simon Snyder, a son of Lancaster County. He was born on North Queen Street, presently numbered 245, on November 5, 1759, a scant quarter of a mile from the old Lancaster courthouse in which his fellow assemblymen elevated him to the Speakership in 1803. Leaving Lancaster at the age of seventeen, he learned the tanning business in York, then moved to Selinsgrove where he opened a general store. A member of the State Assembly since 1797, he had previously served his own community as a Justice of the Peace, and the State as a member of the 1789 Convention which framed a new State Constitution.<sup>25</sup>

## Philadelphia Asks That Seat of Government be Returned There

Pennsylvania's only city, which in 1799 seemed to care very little that the seat of government of the state was removed to the country town of

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<sup>25</sup> Hon. Simon Snyder was elected governor of Pennsylvania in 1808, succeeding Thomas McKean.

Lancaster was putting forth some effort to bring back the Governor and the Legislators to Philadelphia. On January 20, 1803, there was presented to the State Senate a memorial of the citizens of Philadelphia in Select and Common Council assembled. The memorialists stated that they "have seen, with anxious concern, that the removal of the Seat of Government from the City of Philadelphia to the Borough of Lancaster has not been productive of the favorable consequences, which were expected from it" and "that Philadelphia, more than any other place in the State, combines greater advantages to the people at large, and the persons immediately concerned in the several departments of Government." The memorialists therefore respectfully invited "the Legislature and Governor to cooperate in removing the Seat of Government back to the city." Nothing further was heard of the memorial after "it was read and laid on the table."

In the House on February 19, there was presented from Samuel Wright of Columbia to the Speaker a letter which offered "to convey in fee for the use of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania a square containing 16 Lots of ground situated in the Town of Columbia, should the Legislature by Law, fix on that place as the Seat of Government." It, too, was read and laid on the table.

However, there was indication on February 22 that the legislators were ready to tackle the question of a permanent capitol. On that day in the House, "Mr. Potts from the Committee appointed the 15th December on the 9th item of The Governor's Address, recommending legislative provision for the safe keeping of the Public Records in the Offices attached to the Seat of Government, reported as follows:

"That, being duly impressed with the importance of the subject . . . They therefore humbly apprehend that prudence will dictate, and the Duty we owe to our constituents demand that provision should be made as soon as may be, for the erection of Public Offices, for the Safe-keeping of the Records and Papers aforesaid. The committee however presume that a just attention to Economy, would suggest to the Legislature the propriety of fixing the permanent Seat of Government prior to the erection of the Offices aforesaid; They therefore offer the following Resolution

*Resolved* That a committee be appointed to bring in a Bill, to establish the permanent Seat of Government of This Commonwealth at . . . . . in the County of . . . . . and to provide for the erection of Public Buildings for the reception of Legislature and the safe-keeping of the Records in the offices attached to the Seat of Government."

This same resolution was also presented in the Senate, but no bill was actually proposed in either House during the session, so Lancaster remained the Seat of Government.

## **Saint Patrick's Day in Lancaster 1803**

On the 17th inst., the Irish Festival of St. Patrick was celebrated by a company of Irish and American Gentlemen at the house of Mr. and Mrs. John Whiteside, in this Borough. Doctor Leib and Mr. Matthew Carey of Philadelphia and some members of the Legislature were a part of the Company. . . . William Findlay, Esq., Member of Congress from this

State was chosen President; and William McArthur, Esq., Senator of the State Legislature, Vice-President.

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
March 22, 1803

### State Assembly of 1802-1803 Passed 94 Laws, 3 Resolutions

From several sources we have appraisals of the session of the Assembly which closed on April 4, 1803, after sitting since December 7, 1802. The first one is from the *Aurora* of Philadelphia.

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"The Legislature has sat too long, to be consistent with their professions of Economy; they have done too little, to be consistent with their claim to public confidence. They have done some things which they ought not to have done; and left undone what they ought to have done. It is a painful task to be compelled to say this much; but it would be a base desertion of duty to the Public, were this Paper to connive at the Errors of its warmest Friends, any more than of its open enemies."

—*Aurora*  
April 1, 1803

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The editor of the *Lancaster Journal* implied that the members of the Pennsylvania Assembly deliberately prolonged the session, since it was a time of year when no useful work could be done at home.

"Hence it is plain to demonstrate that a member of Assembly may sit four months in Lancaster, in the most dead season of the year for business of every kind, and carry home in his saddle-bags three hundred dollars — saved out of his wages, besides the saving of his rations at home."

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Andrew Ellicott's opinion of the Assembly was that it was costly which was quite different from his estimate of the previous Assembly. He called that session "economy minded."

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#### ANDREW ELLICOTT TO PRESIDENT JEFFERSON

Lancaster, April 5, 1803

"Our legislature adjourned yesterday after a session of four months which will cost the State about 68 thousand Dollars and I fear materially injure the cause of republicanism."

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#### ANDREW ELLICOTT TO BENJAMIN RUSH

Lancaster, April 14, 1803

"Our politicks are going wrong and it will require the joint exertions of all our moderate and well disposed citizens to check the rage for innovation, experiment, and visionary reforms, which without producing one solitary good effect, must if persisted in, lead to anarchy and tumult, as it has in France."

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Included in the ninety-four laws which were passed and signed by Governor McKean were three which authorized that many lotteries. Of the three resolutions there was one which authorized "the Transportation of the Desks and Chairs, the Property of this Commonwealth, which were lately occupied by Congress, from the City of Philadelphia, to the Seat of Government [Lancaster]."

# Governor McKean Celebrates July Fourth at Lancaster

FROM GOVERNOR MCKEAN TO HIS WIFE SARAH

Lancaster, July 3rd, 1803

I arrived here well, tho a little fatigued on Wednesday about five o'clock in the afternoon, since when I have been fully employed. To-morrow we are to celebrate the anniversary of American Independence about a mile from this Borough and next day I am to dine at the country seat of Charles Smith, Esquire, a mile and a half from town, on the Conestoga. . . . <sup>26</sup>

On Monday, the fourth of July, the Anniversary of American Independence was celebrated near this Borough, with a degree of solemnity beyond that of any preceding year. The Day was ushered in by the ringing of the Bells. At 10 o'clock the Light-Infantry Company of the Borough saluted the Governor. At 10 o'clock the Clergy of the different denominations, waited on his Excellency with Compliments of Congratulation on the Day. The Officers of Government, the Officers of Militia, and a number of Gentlemen of the Borough, and its vicinity also complimented the Governor on the occasion. In front of Franklin College 17 Minute-guns were fired, which were answered by Platoon-firings, at the head of King street, by the Light-Infantry.

At 3 o'clock, about 80 Democratic Republicans assembled at Hershey's Springs, about a mile from the Courthouse; where an elegant dinner was provided for the occasion by Mr. Whiteside. Thos. McKean, our Gov. honored the company with his presence.

Timothy Matlack, Esq., was chosen President and Mr. Leonard Eichholtz, Vice-President. The Declaration of Independence was then read by the President. After dinner the following Toasts were drank, viz.

[The prepared toasts numbered 17. The following one was No. 16:]

"The Borough of Lancaster, the first inland-town in America. May our next Legislature have the Firmness to disregard local Prejudice, and declare it the Permanent Seat of Government."

The Governor then retired; when the President gave,

"Thomas McKean, our Governor. May Pennsylvania continue to enjoy the Benefits of his legal knowledge, political skill and truly Republican firmness."

. . . After which the company departed. The Light-Infantry Corps, commanded by Captain Dickson, followed the Cap of Liberty, borne by the President, to the front of Franklin College, where at 7 o'clock, the Evening-gun was fired, and a *Fue de Joy* by a Rifle Company.

The Light-Infantry were discharged, and the Citizens retired to their homes. The Bells continued to ring till Sunset.

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
July 12, 1803

Two other groups of Lancastrians celebrated Independence Day 1803 in a fitting manner. The Union Society of Lancaster which had as its purpose the merging of all parties "repaired to a spring on the banks of Conestoga

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<sup>26</sup> Charles Smith was a leading member of the bar at this time, later served as an Assemblyman, Senator and as a Judge. His wife was a daughter of Jasper Yeates. He built the home known as Hardwicke, which before its demolition, stood near the P. R. R. bridge which spans the Conestoga. It was removed by the P. R. R. when the "cutoff" was opened. Other famous owners of Hardwicke were William Coleman, James Cameron and Robert Cassatt, the father of A. J. Cassatt, one-time president of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

and after partaking of a suitable repast" elected Benjamin Grimler, President and John Swartz, Vice-President for the day.

The Federal Republicans met at Smith's Spring near Lancaster and besides toasting Governor McKean, honored also with toasts their recent candidate for Governor, James Ross, and the recently impeached judge, "Alexander Addison, the Victim of democratic malevolence."

## **Ellicott and Latrobe Appointed Canal Commissioners**

Most interesting are several appointments made by Governor McKean in July 1803, because they brought together two great engineers to work together on the project of the canal which would connect the waters of the Chesapeake and Delaware bays. The one was B. Henry Latrobe who only the year before had supervised the improvement of Susquehanna navigation, and who in the year ahead would receive an appointment from President Jefferson to plan and direct the building of the capitol at Washington. The other was Andrew Ellicott, Pennsylvania's Land Office Secretary and the man who completed the plans of the great capital city on the Potomac after L'Enfant's failure to finish the task.

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### **APPOINTMENTS BY THE GOVERNOR**

Andrew Ellicott, Robert Patterson, and Benjamin Henry Latrobe, Commissioners on the part of this State, to join and co-operate with Commissioners appointed, on the part of the States of Delaware and Maryland, to examine and lay down the nearest and best route for cutting a canal, to unite the Delaware and Chesapeake Bays.

—*Lancaster Intelligencer*  
July 12, 1803

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### **ANDREW ELlicOTT TO ROBERT PATTERSON**

Lancaster, July 14, 1803

I have forwarded with this two commissions—one for yourself and the other for Mr. Latrobe. The Governor is anxious that we shall begin to execute the duties enjoined on us by these commissions as soon as possible. . . .

I wish you and Mr. Latrobe to take the subject into consideration and give me your opinion as soon as convenient. It will be likewise necessary to enter into a correspondence with the Commissioners appointed on behalf of the States of Maryland and Delaware, who will also have to agree to the time and place of meeting.

## **New Quarters in Lancaster for State Offices**

Previously the writer stated that the actual locations in Lancaster of the various departments of the State Government when the borough became the seat of government are now unknown, with one exception, which was that of the Controller General, known also as Auditor General. We definitely know from the following that Samuel Bryan, who held that office when the government moved to Lancaster, took over in December 1801 as his office the room in the public building (Old City Hall) which had been allocated for the use of the Borough.

"William Reichenbach and John Roberts, Esq., Burgesses, Report that they waited on Samuel Bryan, Esq., Controller General for the sum of fifteen pounds for 1 year rent due by him to the Corporation, on the 15th



day of December last for the use of their room in the public Building and Mr. Bryan promises to pay for two years together after the expiration of the second year (which will be on the 15th day of December next) to the Corporation when called on."

—Minutes of the Borough of Lancaster  
September 13, 1803

From several sources we now have evidence that Samuel Bryan in 1803 needed more office space and that he and Samuel Cochran, the State Surveyor General, together rented from the Masonic Lodge their room above the Borough Market House and adjoining the public building. The first evidence we have to substantiate this fact is the following letter, written by Samuel Cochran to "His Excellency, Governor Thomas McKean."

*Samuel Bryan Esq<sup>r</sup> Comptrol<sup>r</sup> General.*  
*To Lodge N<sup>o</sup> 43. &c.*  
*To Rent of the Lodge Room from*  
*Dec<sup>r</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> 1802 till June 5<sup>th</sup> 1804 - at } \$300*  
*\$200 per An<sup>no</sup>.*  
*The same rent is owing to Sam Bryan*  
*Pay the above amount to order of Jacob Martin*  
*Treasurer of Lodge N<sup>o</sup> 43*  
*Wm<sup>th</sup> Herkpatrick Master*

RECEIVED BILL indicating that Comptroller General Samuel Bryan, of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, rented the Lodge Room of Lodge 43, Free and Accepted Masons of Lancaster, beginning December 1802. The lodge then moved with its meetings to the Indian King Inn, South Queen and German (Farnum) Streets. Courtesy of the Department of Public Records of Pennsylvania.

SAMUEL COCHRAN TO GOVERNOR MCKEAN

Surveyor General's Office  
November 30, 1803

Sir:

In compliance with your request communicated to the Secretary of The Commonwealth, I have taken the liberty of reporting to your Excellency

That in April last I removed the Office from the building in which it had been for sometime kept.

Our principal reason for the removal was the danger I apprehended from fire, being situated immediately between two smith shops. In other respects the present situation is superior to the former.

The second bit of evidence is from the history of Lodge 43, Free and Accepted Masons. There we learn that in 1803 the Controller General and the Surveyor General rented from the order their lodge room and that the Masons then moved to Robert Wilson's public house, the Indian King on the corner of South Queen and German (Farnum) streets, where lodge meetings continued until June 24, 1809. That the Masons were willing to relinquish their lodge room indicates that Lancaster citizens had come to realize the town's importance as the seat of government, and were ready to make sacrifices to accommodate the State officers.

### **Pennsylvania Assembly Convenes December 6, 1803**

The printed journals of the House and Senate of the Pennsylvania Assembly give a complete story of the deliberations of Pennsylvania's legislators from 1724 to the present. The Assembly which convened on December 6, 1803, was the fourteenth session since the establishment of the Commonwealth, and so the title page of the printed journal for that session reads in this wise: JOURNAL/ of the/ Fourteenth/ House of Representatives/ of the Commonwealth/ of/ PENNSYLVANIA/ Commenced at Lancaster, on Tuesday, the sixth day of/ December, in the year of our Lord one thousand/ eight hundred and three, and of the common-/ wealth the twenty-eighth./ Lancaster/ Printed by George Helmbold. Jun./ 1803

From this Journal we learn that the House then consisted of 86 members from 28 legislative districts and the Senate consisted of 25 members from 18 senatorial districts. At the time the State was divided into 36 counties.

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This being the day, appointed by the constitution, for the meeting of the General Assembly, a number of gentlemen, elected Members of the House of Representatives, sufficient to form a quorum, met: . . .

The said members proceeded to the choice of a Speaker; and the votes being taken, . . . it appeared that Simon Snyder was unanimously elected.

Frederick Kuhn, one of the associate Judges for the county of Lancaster, attending for the purpose, administered the requisite oaths to the Speaker.

—House Journal  
December 6, 1803

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Agreeably to the order of the day, the House proceeded to the choice of printers, and the votes being taken, it appeared that George Helmbold, junior, was duly elected printer of the Journal in the English language; Moyer and Atkinson, printers of the Journal in the German language; and Dickson and Matthews printers of the bills.

—House Journal  
December 10, 1803

### **Pennsylvania Ratifies Amendment to U. S. Constitution**

It will be remembered that the vote for President and Vice-President in 1801 resulted in an equal number of electoral votes for both Jefferson and Burr, which necessitated an election by the U. S. House of Representatives. That body elected Thomas Jefferson as President. To prevent a repetition of such a tie vote, Congress proposed an amendment to the Constitution.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Gentlemen,

On Saturday evening I received inclosed with a letter from his excellency the President of the United States a copy of an article of amendment proposed by Congress . . . respecting the election of President and Vice-President.

The circumstances attending the last election of these great officers, will doubtless command your early attention to this important subject, and the near approach of the next election of these officers will, I rest assured, induce a speedy determination.

Thomas McKean

Lancaster, Monday, 19th of December 1803

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The Pennsylvania Assembly did act speedily, and on January 7, 1804, Governor McKean approved and signed the act of the General Assembly which was "an act to ratify on behalf of the State of Pennsylvania, an amendment to the constitution of the United States, relative to the choosing of a President and Vice-President." Thus, Pennsylvania was one of the twelve states which ratified the second amendment to the Constitution, following the adoption of the original ten amendments (The Bill of Rights). Known as the twelfth Amendment, it was declared to have been ratified by a proclamation of Secretary of State James Madison on September 25, 1804.

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#### GOVERNOR MCKEAN TO PRESIDENT JEFFERSON

Lancaster, Jan. 8, 1804

Yesterday I signed an Act to ratify, on behalf of the State of Pennsylvania, an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to the choosing of a President and Vice-President of the United States. . . . I confess, I can perceive nothing dangerous or improper in the proposed amendment, unless the precedent may encourage a too frequent attempt of the like kind, when no real necessity demands it. . . . Several Gentlemen of the Republican Party have wished to use my name as a candidate for Vice-President, but I have absolutely declined it on personal and public considerations, and my reasons seem to have given satisfaction.

#### Governor McKean's Son Serves as Private Secretary

In the fall of 1802 Governor McKean brought to Lancaster for the first time his son Thomas, then twenty-three years of age, to serve him as personal secretary. There is little to tell of the residence of Thomas McKean, Jr., in Lancaster. We do know that he first lived with a Mrs. Musser. From references in letters of the Governor, we learn that he did not remain in Lancaster constantly, but was in Philadelphia much of the time.

Writing to his wife, Sarah, on October 10, 1803, from Lancaster, Governor McKean said, "I and our son Thomas enjoy good health, have little amusement, but a good share of business."

On December 22, from Lancaster, the Governor wrote to his son, Thomas, a letter of mild commendation: "You have given me pleasure in telling me you are industriously reading law; you should employ three or four hours every day in that useful study; at your age I spent more than double that time in that science. It will be necessary for you to be here the last of next week at all events. I shall say no more on this subject."

## A. Lancaster School Gives Exhibition in House Chamber

A letter directed to the Speaker from John Riddle and James McCullough, teachers of an English school in the borough of Lancaster, was read, requesting permission to hold their quarterly exhibition on the 27th instant in the Chamber of the House of Representatives.

On motion of Mr. Mitchell (Cumberland County) and Mr. Goodman (Philadelphia County),

Resolved unanimously, That this House grant the request.

—House Journal

Dec. 23, 1803

## House Again Debates the Question of Establishing a Capital

A motion was made by Mr. Findley (Franklin County) and Mr. Weirich (Dauphin County) and read as follows, viz.,

Whereas the public records, papers and documents belonging to the state, have remained since the removal of the seat of government to Lancaster, in private buildings, subject to much risque, and inconveniences, and the removal to Lancaster, in pursuance of the act of the 3d of April, 1799, being only temporary till the permanent seat of government should be established, and as the length of time during which the legislature have occupied the court-house at Lancaster, having fully answered every expectation which could reasonably be derived from the county of Lancaster: Therefore

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to bring in a bill, establishing the permanent seat of government of this commonwealth, at ..... in the county of ..... and providing for the erecting of suitable buildings for the accommodation of the legislature in their sessions, and offices for the preservation and safe-keeping of all records, papers and documents attached to or connected with the government of this state.

(Second reading was made order of the day for January 10).

—House Journal

Jan. 3, 1804

Not until January 18 was the resolution relative to the removal of the seat of government read for the second time. Then, Mr. Ross (Northampton-Wayne) and Mr. Keehmle (Philadelphia) moved to fill the first blank with the words "city of Philadelphia," and the second with the word "Philadelphia." On the question, "Will the House agree so to fill?" it was determined in the negative. Mr. Fenton (Cumberland) and Mr. Porter (Fayette) moved to fill in "Carlisle" and "Cumberland." It was decided negatively. Mr. Franklin (Luzerne) and Mr. Hull (Northumberland) moved to fill in "town of Northumberland" and "Northumberland." That, too, met the same fate. Mr. Witman and Mr. Hiester, both members from Berks moved to fill the blanks with the words "Reading" and "Berks." That was negatived. Mr. Holgate (Philadelphia County) and Mr. Mann (Montgomery) moved to put in the blanks "Germantown" and "Philadelphia." It, too, was determined in the negative. A motion was then made by Mr. Engle (Philadelphia County) and Mr. McFarland (Mifflin) to fill in with the words "Harrisburg" and "Dauphin." On this motion, the Yeas and Nays were called; result, Yeas 35, Nays 47.

A motion was then made by Mr. Spangler (York) and Mr. Patterson (Lancaster) to fill up the first and second blanks with the word "Lancaster."

The Yeas and Nays were again called. The vote of 41 Yeas and 42 Nays, even though it was a negative decision, showed a greater interest in Lancaster as the seat of government than in any other town of the state.

Mr. Weirich (Dauphin) and Mr. Porter moved to fill the blanks with the words "Lebanon" and "Dauphin"; which motion was also decided in the negative. The House then decided to postpone further consideration of the resolution.

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Not a single representative from this county appeared deposed to move that the blanks should be filled with the word Lancaster, and we are indebted to Mr. Spangler of York for the motion.

Several of the members from the northwestern part of the state considered it their duty to vote for some place on the Susquehanna as the permanent seat of government. They voted for Northumberland and Harrisburg and were unsuccessful. Finding that to be the case they would have voted for Columbia if it had been proposed, and had they done so, it certainly would have carried, — but although the sovereign will of the people of Lancaster County has given us 6 representatives (as they are called) not one of them thought proper to nominate Columbia; the consequence is, that the best chance we ever had of fixing the seat of government in the county of Lancaster is shamefully lost.

—*Lancaster Journal*  
January 21, 1804

### **Assembly of 1803-1804 Marked by Much Discussion**

Matters of great importance caused this Assembly to indulge in much discussion and investigation. First was the case of the Commonwealth vs. the heirs of David Rittenhouse, who was Treasurer of the State from 1777 to 1789. The Commonwealth claimed a discrepancy in the fiscal accounts of Rittenhouse and it was after days of pouring over accounts and hearing witnesses that the Assembly passed "a resolution which authorized the Comptroller-General to employ counsel to prosecute the suit brought against the heirs and devisees of David Rittenhouse, deceased."

Also there was considerable debate concerning further improvement of navigation on the Susquehanna, from Columbia to the mouth of the Juniata. Various petitions were presented from citizens of Lancaster, Cumberland, Mifflin, Northumberland, and Lycoming counties, asking that a lottery be authorized to raise fifteen thousands dollars for the purpose. A resolution was accordingly prepared to authorize such a lottery, but the House agreed to postpone action on that resolution to consider a substitute resolution which was proposed. The substitute provided that the money to improve navigation on the Susquehanna would come from the arrearages of state taxes due from the counties of Lancaster, Cumberland and Northumberland. It was lost in committee and another bill appeared, which provided to raise by a lottery "\$20,000 for removing obstructions and improving the navigation of the river Susquehanna." It passed the House but was turned down by the Senate.

There was a veritable flood of Petitions to authorize lotteries presented at this particular session of Assembly. Most of them failed to get favorable action, and among these was one from the German Presbyterian congregation

of Maytown in Lancaster County. They prayed "to be authorized to raise one thousand five hundred dollars by way of a lottery for the purpose of erecting a house of worship." Three acts to raise money for churches by way of lotteries were passed by the Assembly and signed by the Governor. The churches which benefited were African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia, Fourth Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia and two churches in the county of Franklin.

Occasionally there was some plain speaking on the evils of lotteries, as when David Mitchel, member of the House from Cumberland County, rose to point out that "to deal in lotteries is to deal with the devil. Now, sir, how absurd is it to ask money of the devil to help to build a house to worship God in." However there was still too much popular approval of lotteries and not sufficient opposition to outlaw them.

In the closing month of the 1803-1804 session of Assembly, discussion there as well as conversation in social circles of Lancaster and Philadelphia centered around an investigation into a serious charge made by one Thomas Passmore against Chief Justice Edward Shippen and Associate Judges Jasper Yeates and Thomas Smith. Briefly, this is what happened. In 1802 an amicable suit between Thomas Passmore, plaintiff, and Andrew Pettit and Andrew Bayard, defendants, judgment was rendered against the latter two men. Following the close of the court proceedings, Passmore posted in a coffee shop in Philadelphia, a paper which was alleged by Bayard to be a libel against him. Passmore refused to apologize for his act, whereupon Chief Justice Shippen and Judges Yeates and Smith committed Passmore to the common jail in Philadelphia for thirty days and fined him fifty dollars.<sup>27</sup>

The committee in the House which investigated the procedure reported that they felt justified in the opinion that "the judges have exercised a stretch of power . . . and that if such an abuse of power be tolerated . . . there is reason to fear that the safety and personal liberty of the citizen will be annihilated." Assembly adopted a resolution calling for impeachment proceedings against Chief Justice Shippen and Judges Yeates and Smith "for a high misdemeanor in their official capacity by arbitrarily and unconstitutionally fining and imprisoning Thomas Passmore." Judge Hugh Brackenridge, also of the State Supreme Court, requested that he be impeached along with his fellow judges. This the Assembly refused to do; but they voted instead to recommend to Governor McKean his removal from the bench of the State Supreme Court. The impeachment trial of the Chief Justice and his assistants was set for "the first Monday of January next" (1805).

The items which follow, while not of supreme importance, offer interesting sidelights on official life in Lancaster in the first four months of 1804.

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<sup>27</sup> Jasper Yeates (1745-1817), perhaps Lancaster's most useful citizen during the period of the Revolution, had a long and honorable public life. He lies buried in St. James' Episcopal churchyard. His wife was Sarah, daughter of James Burd, and a granddaughter of Edward Shippen of Lancaster.

Judge Edward Shippen was a son of Edward Shippen (above) of Lancaster. Peggy, daughter of Judge Edward Shippen became the wife of Benedict Arnold.

Lancaster, February 13, 1804

Secretary of the Commonwealth

to Henry Slaymaker & Co.

For the carriage of the Governor's Box to and from the city of Philadelphia from November 1801 to January 1804. \$30.00.

April 4, 1804 Received of James Trimble, Deputy Secretary Thirty dollars in full of the above amount.

(Signed) Henry Slaymaker

On motion of Mr. Boileau and Mr. Goodman.

Resolved That the Door-keeper be directed to procure ventilators, and have them put in at least four of the windows of the Chamber of the House of Representatives.

—House Journal

March 3, 1804

Mr. Boileau could not have hit upon a more fortunate expedient. The House is getting hot and contains such a quantity of inflammable gas — that the Lord only knows what might happen without ventilators.

—Lancaster Journal

March 21, 1804

The death of an Assemblyman from Lancaster County occurred on March 6, 1804. He was Samuel Cooke, prominent citizen of Donegal Township. The journal of the House recorded his passing.

Resolved That this House, deeply regretting the death of Samuel Cooke, Esquire, a very worthy and respectable member of their body, and desirous of paying a tribute of respect so justly due to his memory, will at twelve o'clock this day adjourn, in order to attend his funeral, from the house of Mr. David Hall, North Queen street.

—House Journal

March 7, 1804

GOVERNOR MCKEAN TO HIS SON THOMAS

Lancaster, March 15, 1804

You must write to me twice a week; I shall answer once in that period. My attention is daily more and more employed, there are fourteen bills now before me and more expected daily, besides a variety of applications and recommendations for the office of Justice of the Peace, since it has been determined that these gentlemen are to have jurisdiction to the value of one hundred dollars.

GOVERNOR MCKEAN TO HIS SON THOMAS

Lancaster, March 29th at  
night 1804

I received your letters of the 20th and 25th of March instant. The former came to hand only last night as the box had been mislaid at Mr. Slaymakers, and the latter by post, the third day after it was written.

To-day the two Houses of the General Assembly have resolved to rise on Tuesday. The Senate have declined to grant the Judges of the Supreme Court a trial of their impeachment until the 2 day of January next . . . Their conduct in this affair has given alarm and created a disquiet in the mind of every sensible and honest man.

I shall expect the carriage here on Tuesday; you had better come here in it. On Thursday I hope to leave this; but whether I shall return by Chatham & Wilmington or directly down the Turnpike Road to Phila is yet undetermined.

Never have I been more employed than at this time, and I shall remain in the same way until I quit Lancaster.

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The Assembly adjourned on April 3, 1804.

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Grand Jury, solicitous to render the accommodations of the Legislature as convenient and agreeable as possible recommend to the Court that chimneys should be erected on the Court House at the expense of the County so as to warm the Hall of the House of Representatives by Open Fires instead of the present mode; which they conceive to be uncomfortable to the members and dangerous to the Building.

(Signed) Fred Steinman, Foreman  
and 18 Jurors

Adopted.

—Minutes of County Commissioners  
Lancaster County  
April 17, 1804

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*To be continued in 1953.*