

Journal of Ensign Thomas Hughes

Prisoner of War at Lancaster, May 1779 to November 1780
Compiled and Annotated by Herbert H. Beck

This diary¹ of a young British officer is unique in the local records of its period. Lieutenant Thomas Anburey, prisoner of war, who was in Lancaster December 17 and 18, 1778, in his "Travels through the Interior Parts of America in a Series of Letters" (London, 1789), left interesting and valuable observations on Lancaster and Lancaster County; but Ensign Hughes lived in the town for eighteen months, during which time he noted his life and the life about him. There is no known record, from a British observer, covering so long a period in Lancaster, to compare with that in the Journal of Ensign Thomas Hughes.

Thomas Hughes (1759-1790), leaving Eton School in 1774, enlisted in the 53d Regiment. Shortly afterward he purchased an ensigncy,² and in April 1776 his regiment was dispatched to Canada as a reinforcement. Here, under Burgoyne, he was made a prisoner at Ticonderoga. He was taken to Boston, which he found "by no means inferior in size or buildings to the largest towns in England." Parole was granted him, and thereafter, during nearly four years as a prisoner, he seems to have enjoyed a good deal of freedom. He was transferred from Boston to nearby Pepperell, where he spent considerable time. Here, on April 30, 1778, he notes: "Some men, cutting down a tree, a number of squirrels jumpt out of a hole near the top, and flew away. The oddness

¹ "A Journal by Thos. Hughes", Cambridge at the University Press, 1947. Edited by E. A. Benians, Cambridge University. By permission of the publisher.

² An Ensign was a commissioned officer of the lowest grade, which was later known as a sub-lieutenant. It was a common custom of nobility and wealth to purchase ensigncies for their sons. Oxford Dictionary.

of the sight led some of us to a pursuit and we soon caught three. Smaller than a common squirrel they only differ by having thin membranes growing from shoulder to hind leg. When they spring to any great distance they extend these membranes as a kind of sails, which supports them in a descent (for they cannot mount) for twenty or thirty yards."

The American flying squirrel was new to him. He describes it accurately. Again, on May 8: "Everything being in bloom my entertainment is observing a number of humming birds***as they buzz about like bumble bees. Capt. Davies shot one with sand. Its plumage beggars description [in beauty]. The bill was an inch in length and so sharp it entered the flesh like a needle." His first sight of a ruby-throated hummingbird evidently made a deep impression.

From Pepperell the prisoner was taken through other small towns to New York. Here he says, "The town may contain four thousand houses mostly of stone and brick;" and (December 11) "Our amusement here is that of duck shooting. The people make use of a decoy in winter by painting their boats white, hiding themselves and then floating like a lump of ice. By this finesse they will get among flocks and kill 30 at a shot." Then he was taken to Elizabeth [town], New Jersey, "straggling place that may contain 700 houses."

On January 15, 1779, "Crossed the Delaware to Easton. We were badly accomodated at a one floor inn—my room ankle deep in water." January 18, "The Delaware being partly frozen — went and skated on it." April, "All my amusement at present is trout-fishing, which, as they are in great plenty, is very entertaining. The inhabitants have a droll way of catching shad, a fish I never saw in England."

May 2, "An expedition being planned against the Indians under the command of Gen'l Sullivan, two of the Reg'ts to be employ'd arriv'd here." This was the famous and successful Sullivan campaign against the Six Nations (Iroquois), which was organized at Easton, and in which General Edward Hand, of Lancaster, played a prominent part.

May 14, "Received an order to go to Lancaster on parole—80 miles from here."

May 18, "Marched from Easton 12 miles to the town of Beth-

lehem—a neat pleasant place on the banks of the Lehigh.” He describes the community life of the Moravians here and says of the tavern (doubtless the Sun Inn, which is still there under that name), “It is far the best of any we have found out of York [New York].”

Next day they breakfasted at Allentown and in the afternoon entered Reading, “A neat regular town on the banks of the Schuylkill.” “About 12 o’clock we forded the river***to put up at even at Rheems [Reamstown]—a paltry dirty little village and not worth mentioning.”

May 22. “At Lancaster—where we have an excellent tavern. On our arrival were delivered to a Mr. Henry [William], who has charge of us in the absence of a Mr. Atlee [William]—our Commissary. To Mr. Henry we were obliged to sign a parole—the limits only one mile—which he says is the positive orders of the Commissary we shall not exceed.”

Further evidence will show an amazing flexibility to the one mile limit.

Lancaster—Largest Inland Town

May 24. “Lancaster is the largest inland town in North America, but it makes no appearance till you are got into it as it lies in a bottom. The buildings are good and the whole town being lay’d out in squares (according to Penn’s plan) makes it look very regular and pretty. The Court House stands in the centre from whence the principal streets lead in straight lines; they have a Market House, gaol and several churches—one of which is an English one but they have at present no service, as the parson taking the contrary side in the disputes was obliged to fly the country.” (This was Thomas Barton, tory pastor of St. James’ Episcopal Church.) “The town contains about 800 houses and 6000 inhabitants.” (Most visitors to early Lancaster over-estimated its population. The first official census of the United States, 1790, credited the town with 3773.) “The country round here is esteemed the most fertile in Pennsylvania for grain. The most material want experienced at Lancaster is that of a river—though that is in some measure remedied by a small creek, which runs within a mile, and turns a number of mills. Lee’s Regt. of Light Horse are stationed here at present, their barracks are on the verge of the town and are surrounded by a strong stoccade

20 feet high, defended by four bastion lighthouses. This Regt. is the best appointed corps of any I have seen in America, they being extremely well mounted, well clothed and all stout young fellows." Col. Henry Lee, Light Horse Harry, was Washington's best cavalry officer. The Ensign's compliments went to Lee's mounts and men, rather than to the Conestoga River.

"May 26. Mr. Atlee, the Commissary, being arrived, waited on him to complain of the smallness of our limits. He says it is not in his power to enlarge them without orders from his superiors but promises to write the Board of War in our favor. I look on this entirely as an excuse—certainly Mr. Atlee has as much power here as Col. Hooper had at Easton."

"May 29. Have been looking out these several days for lodgings but cannot procure any—the inhabitants say they are afraid to take in British officers, as they shall be accounted Tories. A blessed state of liberty, where people cannot do what they please with their own homes."

"June 4. With difficulty have got lodging. Entirely out of cash and cannot find a person to give us money for a bill. Sent a strong memorial to Sir Henry—if it fails, our only alternative is the gaol."

"June 16. Lee's Regt of Light Horse march'd for Washington's camp. Sir Henry Clinton is gone up the North River and it is reported the American army are gone after him; if true, it may bring on a general action which will determine the contest."

"June 18. Received a bill for 150 sterling from New York—this has put us in good humour again as we can pay off some debts due people that want their money."

"June 20. Walking this morn observed 8 or 10 birds as large and very like turkeys; they are called Turkey Buzzards and live on carrion. These are not good to eat—but they have wild turkeys in the woods which will weigh thirty pounds and are esteemed great dainties."

Once more he sees life new to him. Evidently there was still good wild turkey hunting in Lancaster County in 1779.

"June 30. The Whigs have been greatly elevated of late, by accounts of a defeat of our troops under Genl Prevost in South Carolina—but it proves entirely fiction; instead of a defeat our troops have been victorious in several skirmishes."

News traveled slowly in those days. Prevost, Governor of East Florida, where many Loyalists from the southern colonies had rallied, had collected a force for the raiding of the Carolinas, and was operating in a campaign which of course ultimately failed, from the newly captured base of Savannah.

“July 4. This day being the anniversary of American Independence, the militia paraded in great pomp and fired; but in the afternoon these sons of liberty being a little elated took it into their heads to attack a set of the chief people in town who were making merry at a tavern on this joyous occasion. The only reason for this assault was the militia being affronted at the gentlemen drinking by themselves—they thinking that there ought to be no distinction but all get drunk together. The affair ended in breaking some windows—for on this salutation the gentlemen (as they called themselves) sallied out sword in hand and routed the mobile [mob]. I am in hopes it will not end so quietly as the vanquish’d denounce vengeance.”

For nearly a century later the local “Fourth” was a day of heavy drinking.

“July 10. The mob rose this even—and paraded through the streets to beat the gentleman party. One unfortunate hero fell into their hands and they thrash’d him very handsomely.”

This affair seems to have been more than a 4th of July brawl, for the class feeling lingered in sobriety.

“July 22. Gen’l Clinton having advanced up the North River and erected forts, returned to New York leaving as he imagined sufficient garrisons to defend them. The Americans have taken advantage of his absence—attacked and carried the post of Stony Point under the command of Col. Johnson of the 17th Regt; they killed or took 500 men. Their success as usual has raised their spirits and they say it’s folly for British to attempt a war with America.”

“July 29. Genl Sullivan having gone into the Indian country—a party of savages in return have fallen on the frontiers and committed great depredations.”

“August 3. Col. Johnson and most of the officers taken at Stony Point came here on parole. The wounded were permitted to go to York and their men are sent to Philadelphia gaol—they were all plundered.”

The diarist frequently calls New York, York, here and elsewhere.

“August 12. Procured leave to go to the Susquehanna River with a party of girls. The ride was 10 miles and the day past very agreeably. Crossed the river which is near 2 miles over, but it has such a number of shallows and falls that it is not navigable even for boats. In the even returned.”

To Wright's Ferry with a party of girls! Doubtless the town girls found this well-bred, twenty-year-old Englishman good company. They must have crossed the river in a ferry-boat. Some local liveryman must have furnished the twenty-mile transportation.

A Visit To Lititz

“August 14. Went today on another party of pleasure to see some iron mills—were treated very politely by the proprietor with whom we dined. On our return pass'd through Lititz a small Moravian town; they permitted us to see their church which is small and ornamented with passions of Our Savior—not by the most masterly hand.”

Returning as this party did through Lititz it must have visited “iron mills” in northern Lancaster County. Robert Coleman, of Elizabeth Furnace, north of Brickerville, was most probably the proprietor who entertained them at dinner; though they might have seen the forges along the Hammer creek, Speedwell, Upper and Lower Hopewell, in operation. Coleman had a number of Hessian prisoners of war in his employ at that time.

The present Moravian church at Lititz was not built until 1787. The small church which Hughes visited in the Moravian Community was the building, against the present church, and now in use as a parsonage. In 1779 this building was known as the Gemeinhaus, and all services were held in it. The “passions of Our Savior,” which Hughes mentions, were oil paintings by Valentine Haidt. They may be seen in the Brethren's House of the Lititz Moravian Congregation today.

“Another party of pleasure”, two days after that to the Susquehanna with a party of girls, would indicate that the girls probably were in this party to northern Lancaster County. But how about Commissary Atlee's one-mile parole limit?

“August 22. As some officers were sitting at the doors with

ladies last night (which is the custom of this country) several rascals flung stones and threatened to beat them if they remained out after 9 at night. Mr. Atlee has behaved very well on this occasion having obliged one of the fellows to give 10,000 dollars bail not to insult us more."

\$10,000 is high bail, even today. It is probable that Hughes misunderstood this, or exaggerated it. But anyway Atlee would see to it that British officers on parole were respected by the town people.

"August 29. Dr. Horn and Mr. Horndon—two gentlemen taken at Stony Point but permitted to go to New York—arrived here today. They give intelligence of a reinforcement of troops and ships under Adml Arbuthnot."

"September 4. The news of the day is that Spain has declar'd war against Great Britain."

In June 1779 Spain declared war on England.

"Sept. 10. Went with a party of gentlemen to the Susquehanna. Our landlady at the tavern treated us very uncivilly and at last openly abused us."

"Sept. 19. About 100 vagabonds gathered by beat of drum with intentions of insulting the British officers—but our good allies, the gentlemen of the town, went and dispersed them."

"Sept. 23. Genls Phillips and Reidesel of the Conventioners came here on their way to York to remain there on parole. Their American conductor had a list of other officers who were to go in—my name was amongst them and I am in great hopes of being at York by the end of next month."

"Sept. 30. Seven soldiers broke gaol last night by undermining the wall—being confined in the dungeon."

"October 3. All hopes of a speedy exchange are now over—the Commissaries having quarrelled on some trifling subject which may occasion our stay here all winter."

"Oct. 5. The mob rose at Philadelphia on account of the high price of provision—which are scarcely to be purchas'd for Congress money. Amongst their riots, they attempted to pull down a house,

³The Conventioners were those of Burgoyne's army who had surrendered at Saratoga. To save Burgoyne's feelings terms were drawn as "A Convention between Lieutenant General Burgoyne and Major General Gates." Baron Von Riedesel was a German general, one in command of the Hessians captured at Saratoga.

which produced a skirmish between the military and the populace. Some people were killed and wounded on both sides—the rioters are not yet quell'd.”

“Oct. 10. Genl Sullivan’s expedition against the Indians has met with success—having marched into their country, beat them in one engagement and destroyed their settlements. The Indians are not yet so far humbled as to sue for peace.”

“Oct. 13. Saw an opossum with nine young. It is an ugly animal about the size (and not unlike) a pig of two months old. The animal is remarkable for having a false belly—into which the young ones creep (at the approach of danger) and the mother carries them off. They are common in the woods here and it is not unusual for the country people to eat them but they are first obliged to bury them for a day or two—to take off their rank smell.”

This is another good account of an animal new to the diarist.

“Oct. 17. Complaints having been lodged to the Board of War against us they sent orders for our always being at home by 9 at night. We have positively refus’d compliance—I imagine we shall hear no more of it.”

“Oct. 20. The French Fleet are now off Savannah in Georgia which they intend taking before they attack New York. We have 2 or 3000 men entrench’d there under Gen’l Prevost—who will give good account of both American and French that dare attack him.”

“Oct. 24. The Americans are grown heartily tired of this war—even those who a few months ago hated the name of an Englishman now openly court our friendship and tell us they wish a reconciliation could take place; and the country appears as ready now for an alteration of measures as they were when the rebellion commenced. This turn of affairs is not owing to any latent friendship for Great Britain—for the rebels in general have not the least spark of gratitude; but it arises entirely from the management of their rulers, the disaffection of their troops, the depreciation of their paper currency and their immense taxes. These complicated distresses seem to have opened their eyes towards their own safety; and it is the fear of the consequences that may ensue should we succeed that induces them to make their peace. In short they are sensible they deserve hanging and they would

fain slip their necks out of the halter. This observation is entirely founded on their behavior; at the receipt of good news their insolence is insufferable, but bad affects their coward hearts, and they fawn like beaten spaniels."

"Oct. That the Colonies will again be under the jurisdiction of Great Britain, is (in my opinion) a thing of course; my only fear is that, at the time of pacification, the lenity of the mother country will leave the seeds of rebellion still in the country — which perhaps will again blaze forth at a period when it will be impossible to stop it."

Ensign Hughes seems to be speaking for the group of English officers, in Lancaster, in the last two entries. With them the complete subjugation of the Colonies was only a matter of time. It would be interesting to have had the thoughts of Col. William Henry, Superintendent of Arms and Accoutrements for the revolutionary cause, here in Lancaster, at the same time that Ensign Hughes wrote the above.

"Oct. 26. Genl Hand, one of the commanding officers against the Indians, is just arrived in this town. The troops employ'd on that expedition are on their return to join Genl Washington on the North River having (as 'tis reported) entirely destroy'd the towns of the Five Nations with the inconsiderable loss of 40 men."

Did Edward Hand, returning victorious to his home town, receive a hero's welcome? There is no record. The English were apparently still calling the Iroquois Confederacy the Five Nations. After 1712, when the Senecas, Oneidas, Onondagos, Cayugas and Mohawks absorbed the Tuscaroras, this powerful confederacy in New York State was known as the Six Nations.

"Oct. 30. The want of cash obliges us to borrow paper money to be paid for in solid coin—we are allowed 25 paper dollars for one silver dollar, but had we ready specie we could get 50. As this reduces us to half pay, wrote Sir Henry Clinton to complain of our situation and desire pay may be regularly sent us."

There evidently was free interchange of correspondence between the lines.

"Nov. 10. Our troops have evacuated Rhode Island (after having kept possession three years against the united attempts of France and America) and are retired to York. Various are the conjectures on this manoeuvre—for my own part it is beyond compre-

hension. However it has answered one purpose, that of putting these rascals in great spirits, who say our troops are recall'd and we are going to leave the continent."

"Nov. 21. A strange meteor was seen in the south, just as the sun went down. It appeared like a ball of fire and left a long trail of light—something like the turnings of a cork-screw—visible for near a hour."

"Nov. 25. The first fall of snow for the season—it was two feet deep."

"Nov. 30. Being St. Andrew's Day, several of our Caledonian lads met at a tavern. Some Americans being there a quarrel ensued on some trifling subject, and a rebel captain struck one of our officers—who immediately challeng'd him. Instead of accepting it the son of liberty only abus'd them the more and swore he would get them put into gaol. Brown was unfortunately in the fray."

"Dec. 1. The officers in the riot of yesterday are confined to their rooms till Mr. Atlee (who is at present in Philadelphia) returns—when the affair is to be brought to a hearing and settled."

"Dec. 7. To such a low state is got the credit of Congress money that our messman says he can provide us no longer, though we pay him weekly 50 pounds each—for dinner alone, without drink."

"Dec. 10. No tavern keeper choosing to mess us for paper, we were obliged to break up. My landlord offering to provide me dinner for 2 shill:and 6 pence daily, I have accepted it. My expenses at present are above two guineas weekly and this at a time when I am reduced to half pay by the neglect of those who ought to supply me with cash—a comfortable situation."

"Dec. 12. Washington, thinking the southern Colonies in danger, had detach'd three thousand of his best troops to assist them. Am in hopes they will arrive too late as they have to march 700 miles before they arrive at the scene of action—a jaunt not the most desirable at any time, much less so when the ground is covered with snow."

"Dec. 14. A remarkable cold thick snow-storm."

"Dec. 20. Genl Gates pass'd through here in his way to the south'ard—where it is imagined he is to command. Gates was

dress'd in a grey frock coat and a bob-wig—his suite was two aide de camps and a domestick.⁴"

A Cold Christmas

"Dec. 25. There being no other place of public worship (where they preacht in English) but a Roman Catholic chapel, went there — but the cold was so intense that I was almost froze before service was over, but most of the Roman Catholics are friends to Government and I believe, if an opportunity offered, would fight against those of their own religion—the French."

"Dec. 29. The 17th Regt were brought here under guard and are to be sent to Virginia—the poor fellows are ragged and the weather piercing cold."

"Anno Domini—1780."

"January 1. New Year's Day—the third since my captivity and no more prospect of an exchange now than at the first. The people have a custom of welcoming in the New Year by firing of muskets; they kept such a clattering all last night that I imagin'd an enemy had attacked the town—or that the inhabitants were gone mad."

"Jan. 5. 150 more British prisoners came here, but the guard are so averse to marching in this weather that they have refused taking further charge of our men—40 of whom have already made their escape."

"Jan. 7. Two Regts of Virginians whose time of enlistment is expir'd march'd through without arms (in their way home); both battalions scarcely muster 200 men, and they made the most rueful tattered figure I ever have seen. If this is the reward of your services, and gratitude of your country, deluded Americans—your situations are not enviable."

"Jan. 9. The guard which brought our 150 men on the 5th were prevail'd on again to take charge of them — when they march'd, only 50 remain'd."

"Jan. 11. A Regt of Continentals—part of the reinforcement for the security of the Southern States—march'd in here. They were 450 strong, had good clothing, were well arm'd and show'd more of the military in their appearance than I ever conceived American troops had yet attained."

⁴ Domestick—an antiquated form of the word domestic.

“Jan. 12. The troops which march’d in to town yesterday are not under the strictest subordination—they refused pursuing their route today on account of the cold weather. Their officers do not seem capable of obliging them.”

“Jan. 13. Genl Thompson arriv’d last night from Philadelphia and assures us that an exchange is positively agreed to; this has put us in high glee.”

“Jan. 15. The Mohairs (aliter Town Bucks) having hinted at giving balls—at which no British officers were to be invited—it was resolv’d to be beforehand with them; gave a hop last night at which all the ladies in town were present. It was an agreeable evening—had a supper and danced till three this morning.”

This great British Officers’ Ball, with supper and “all the ladies in town” must have been held in one of Lancaster’s central hotels. It seems to be unique in Lancaster’s social calendar. It was evidently a banner event for the town girls; but where were the “Town Bucks”?

“Jan. 18. A most shocking murder was committed last night near this town by some drunken rascals—by way of frolic. A country man coming into the room where they were drinking, he was desir’d to play cards—with which he complied, but having lost some money he declin’d playing any more. This refusal exasperated the villians and one proposed roasting him, which they performed by the most cruel methods they could devise—till at last they burnt him to death over a red-hot stove.”

One of Lancaster County’s most terrible crimes; here definitely recorded.

“Jan. 19. A Regt of 400 men with six pieces of brass cannon march’d in great parade into town—the cannon are some of those taken from Burgoyne. The troops were well cloth’d and are part of the southern reinforcement. They have 3 standards, one in the centre of the Regt, and one in the middle of each wing; the colors were blue, red and white, with thirteen stripes in the corner of each.”

“Jan. 21. Not a farthing in my pocket, do not know where to apply for any loan and thirty guineas in debt—thanks to Loring for this. I was going to curse thee, Joshua, but, upon recollection, thou are sufficiently curst in thy wife.”

“Jan. 24. Another Regt of 400 men pass’d through for Virginia.”

“Jan. 26. A principal inhabitant dying, was buried this even, at which I cannot help observing a custom of this country—that the body is always carried by the chief people of the town and the gentlemen look on it as the greatest mark of respect to be appointed a bearer. As the person buried was very corpulent they paid pretty dearly for their honour.”



HOME OF CALEB COPE
Here Ensign Thomas Hughes Was Interned

“Feb. 1. The weather is so remarkably cold that a rapid stream never known to be frozen—but in the stillest parts—is now so cover’d with ice and snow as not to be discovered from terra firma.”

“Feb. 4. Mr. Cope—my landlord—was call’d before the Chief Justice for raising reports prejudicial to the United States. His principal fault was saying Charleston was taken by the British. Cope confess’d he had spoken of it as it was the common talk—he was reprimanded for his easy belief and dismiss’d.”

This is Hughes’ first note of his locally famous landlord, who lived at the northeast corner of Lime and Grant streets. Caleb

Cope, a refugee from Philadelphia in 1776, had been the landlord of Major André, prisoner of war, at the same house. Hughes' entry stresses the promptness of action by the Board of War against common talk prejudicial to the cause.

"Feb. 5. Forty people crossing the Susquehanna in sleighs—being on return from a wedding—the ice broke, and six and thirty were drowned—amongst the unfortunates the newly married couple."

This may have been the Susquehanna's greatest tragedy of all time.

"Feb. 6. Of all the situations of life, that of having no pursuit is the worst. The mind having nothing to occupy its attention falls into a lethargy which makes it grow tir'd and displeas'd with every thing about it. This is my case; my time hangs heavy and I scarcely know how to spin out the day. I generally lay till ten, go to breakfast and then down the town to play billiards or pick up the news. Here I find a number of stupid beings as dull as myself—yawning and sauntering from room to room and cursing their ill stars for keeping them in such a vile hole as Lancaster. After satisfying my curiosity as to news and having vented my spleen either by swearing at the weather or times, I return home pleas'd for finding that I am not the only phlegmatic creature of the society; and with a great deal of ado drawl out the remainder of the day talking politics with my landlord, nonsense with the young lady of the house (a good agreeable girl) or building castles in the air which, when vanish'd, serve by comparison to make my present existence more disagreeable. What an opportunity to study French or some other useful language, but it is impossible to procure books."

"Feb. 8. A day capable to make an Englishman hang himself—the wind howls discord and it snows so hard that one would think it intended to cover us. Not a soul is stirring through the streets and were it not for half a dozen brats squalling and fighting in the next room, I could almost imagine myself in a town just after Noah's Flood. Mem: Just reading the Bible."

Good picture of a February blizzard driving down Lime street.

"Feb. 11. Congress have issued orders that no prisoner of war shall be exchanged till his debts are paid—this is a good sign and I hope a prelude to a general cartel."

A Harmless Duel

"Feb. 24. A duel was fought this morning between Mr. Carey and Mr. Swords (two of us). After discharging pistols without effect the seconds interfered and it was made up—it was occasioned by a drunken quarrel in which blows past."

"Feb. 28. Several officers, being a little merry last night, sung God save the King—for which they were threatened to be put into prison this morning. The great ones have thought better of it and we are ordered never to be guilty of the like again for fear of consequences—but we are determined to sing it whenever we choose in defiance of all the gaols and rebels in America."

"Mar. 3. The landing of the British troops (under Sir Henry Clinton) in Georgia is confess'd by Congress but as usual to palliate the impending evil they have sunk a number of ships by storms and drown'd half the army."

"Mar. 6. The spring is advancing rapidly and the feather'd gentry who forsake this country and fly south'ard during the frozen months are again returned and chant harmony from every budding bush."

These were early robins, bluebirds and red-winged blackbirds. There were no English sparrows or starlings here then. The common birds of Lancaster were the bluebird and the robin. The poetry of Nature is in the Ensign's entry.

"Mar. 10. The people are perfectly enraged at the heavy taxes and militia law that is about to pass—by which every person between the ages of 60 and 16, who refuses turning out when called on, confiscates estates and property. This last has incensed some towns so much that they sent a remonstrance begging it may be dropp'd—at the head of which (in terrorem) was depicted a bloody tomahawk."

"Mar. 12. Troops are marching from all quarters toward the south'ard. A party of horse pass'd through to day and more are expected—imagine they are in trepidation for the Carolinas."

"April 18. A large reinforcement of troops are embarked from York to join Sir Henry Clinton, who has begun the siege of Charlestown. A number of Americans have entered the town since our troops took post near it."

"May 2. Nature is now in its gayest apparel, everything being in bloom. This town from the mode of laying it out—

by which every house is allow'd a garden—appears to be situated in a wilderness of fruit trees whose diversity of bloom blended—and interrupted by houses, churches etc. etc.—forms altogether a most enchanting scene.”

Blossom time in early Lancaster is neatly portrayed.

“May 10. The Indians are on the frontiers and seldom a day passes that does not bring accounts of their depredations. At present there are affairs of too great moment on the carpet to think of resenting their inroads, so they scalp and burn with impunity.”

“May 16. The most recent accounts from South Carolina mention Charlestown being so closely invested by land and water that no intelligence of the situation of the garrison could be receiv'd. Our ships have enter'd the harbor in spite of their shipping and Fort Moultrie—which the rebels thought impossible. The only thing to hinder the town from falling into our hands will be the climate. If the siege is protracted till next month, the heat will be too intense for the soldiers to carry on the approaches.”

“May 23. The Americans are in great spirits, as they say several thousand French are coming to join Washington's army—sent across the Atlantic by their great and good ally to assist them.”

“June 6. Charlestown is taken—it surrendered the 12th of May. What number of prisoners were captured is uncertain, Whigs make out militia, Continentals and sailors about 5 thousand—the Tories ten thousand men.”

“June 20. A complaint having been lodg'd against one of our officers for speaking disrespectfully of the militia's martial appearance, he was call'd before the Commissary to answer for his conduct—Col. Johnson and several others went with him. At their arrival at Mr. Atlee's, they found that diminutive gentleman in a violent rage which he vented on them in most opprobrious language; but the storm soon expending he grew asham'd of his behavior and to mollify us extended our parole three miles.”

“June 26. About 100 militia of this town march'd for camp—in passing by some of us, who were observing them, they honour'd us with the appellation of Bloody Backs. Lt. Horndon was beat publicly in the streets this morn by the adjutant of the militia for using freedom with that gentleman's wife—Atlee will not interfere in the quarrel so Horndon must put up with the drubbing.”

Doubtless the late Judge Benjamin Champneys Atlee, of the Lancaster County Court, if he had had to pass judgment on this case, would have ruled as did his ancestor.

A. Mennonite Wedding

“June 27. Went with some ladies on an excursion into the country; in our tour hearing by accident of a wedding within 5 miles of us, nothing would please the girls but we must be there. We arriv’d just as the ceremony began, and were ushered into a large room where near 50 people were seated at two long tables. At the head of the room stood two old men who pray’d alternately, to appearance extempore, but it being in German I could not understand them. After long praying mixed with long pauses, the couple were brought in the middle of the floor, when the old men gave them good advice as to their future behavior and asked if they were willing to live together—on their assenting their hands were joined and the affair was finish’d. It was now about 12 o’clock—the tables were immediately spread and we had an excellent German repast (where every thing was boiled and roasted to rags) with plenty of cyder, toddy and beer. After the appetite was satisfied, the whole company adjourn’d to an extensive lawn where the young men and women play’d at various games till 4 o’clock, when we received notice that the dinner was ready. This meal was a profusion of soups, meats, pies, etc, enough for a Regt of soldiers. The attendants were the bridegroom and his men, the bride, who was remarkably pretty, did the honours of the table supported by her maids. The signal for the whole being over—and after which people depart without ceremony—is the handing a plate round the table in which every person puts what they think proper; this is supposed to be a gratification to the cooks for their trouble. These people are of a sect call’d Mennonite. I could never gain a perfect knowledge of their tenets—I believe they approach nearest the Quakers; like them they think it unlawful to fight, or pay taxes, and they never wear buckles or metal buttons. There are numbers of these people in this part of the country who are rich farmers. This wedding was esteemed a very poor one—they sometimes have 500 guests. Our party turned out very entertaining—though in leaping I was

unfortunately thrown, and the horse stumbled over me; receiv'd but little hurt."

This notable and well-recorded expedition to a Mennonite wedding seems to have been done in the saddle; though there may have been a "leaping" contest in connection with the afternoon games on the Mennonite farm in which a few mounts were used. Anyway this young Englishman, doubtless with foxhunting experience, was taking the Lancaster County fences. And those two Pennsylvania Dutch meals evidently impressed him; and with "cyder, toddy and beer"!

"July 3. The prospect of the ensuing harvest is very promising. Rye is already fit for cutting; currants, rasberries and cherries are so plenty that you get them for nothing amongst the farmers."

"July 4. A great day—being the third [?] anniversary of American Independence; the militia fired thirteen rounds and we had nothing but bon-fires and rejoicings all night."

"July 9. One of our officers being refused leave to go a few miles out of his limits took pique—and flung up his parole. He is in gaol and closely confined."

"July 11. The German officers who have been our companions for two years past were sent off to Reading—the reason given for their removal is their having advised the German farmers (settled round here) not to pay their taxes."

"The officer who flung up his parole in a pet, in three days confinement has thought better of it and has now requested liberty to come out of gaol again. He is universally condemn'd for having acted a most foolish part—he ought either to have stuck up to his resolve of remaining there, or not gone at all."

This is the first record of Hessian officers on parole in Lancaster. The comments on the "officer who flung up his parole" indicates that the principle of parole was held sacred by both sides.

"July 14. Another of our officers was sent to gaol for propagating humbugs (aliter telling lies) amongst the country people."

"July 15. An order from the Board of War that every British officer should wear his proper uniform and that whoever after this was found in a coloured coat should be taken up and put to prison. This has put most of us to an inconveniency as it is amazing difficult to procure cloth."

This requirement would indicate that Hughes went to the Mennonite wedding in British uniform. Later, December 15, at Elizabethtown, N. J., he says: "The tailor for making charges more than the things cost first—by which means a plain suit of red stands me in £12."

"July 29. Several prisoners made their escape last night — some officers' servants are confined for having assisted them."

"August 2. Three of our bucks got so drunk in the country that in returning to town they fell off their horses and were very near killing themselves—one of them is at present in so bad a way that his recovery is doubtful. So much for drinking and buckism—it is too warm to live with comfort."

"Aug. 5. Two of our officers being exchanged we took the opportunity of sending a memorial to Sir Henry Clinton informing him of our long captivity and begging him to be included in the first cartel. Some rascals pelted me with brick-bats this even—luckily escaped unhurt."

"Aug. 11. Washington has crossed the North River and taken post at the White Plains where he has called on the militia of the Northern States to join him, with an intent to attack New York. They make his army already 30,000 strong."

"Aug 12. An express arrived here from Washington with a circulary letter to the different towns, in which that general requests their sending three classes of militia immediately to him—which if they perform with alacrity, he promises never to trouble them again, as he has now an opportunity of finishing the war. This shows that the military ardour of the country is greatly lessen'd when Washington himself is obliged to make use of so poor a stratagem to engage the people to assist him. I have it from good authority that Washington's real (or what the rebels call their standing) army is reduced to 4000 men."

"Aug. 16. The Indians are come down in great numbers on the frontiers where they have taken some forts, carried off the people and destroyed the country."

"Aug. 22. An English packet being taken with five officers on board, they were all sent here. By them we have accounts of a terrible riot in London—raised by that madman Lord George Gordon—in which many of the mobile were killed; but not till they had raised to such an insolent pitch of fury that they set fire to

several parts of the metropolis, when the military power was called on, which with some exertion stopped the further proceeding of the vagabond gentry. Ld. G. Gordon is confined in the Tower and it is said will be tried for high treason."

These were the famous Gordon Riots of June 1780.

"Aug. 25. 16 of our men who were in the prison broke through the wall and made their escape—in order to drown the noise of their working, they pretended to be very merry on some good news they had heard."

"Aug. 26. Three classes of the militia are again ordered out, but for what particular business I cannot learn—those who refuse are fined 600 pounds. It is impossible to imagine a more abject race than the generality of these Americans. They all plainly see how much they are imposed on and say themselves they shall be ruined if the war last—and yet they have not spirit to rise and turn out those rascals at the head of their government; instead of which they all grumble, and when the tax-gatherers come around, though many refuse paying they allow them to take what they please (which is always three times the value of the tax), and thus by ruining themselves think they do a meritorious act and call themselves friends to the British."

While this is an English version of the situation, it definitely shows the loose, rocky paths along which Independence was finally won.

"September 2. Genl Gates, who for two months past has been collecting the forces of the Southern States, having approacht Ld. Cornwallis, a general action ensued near Camden which terminated in a total defeat to the rebel army. Report says the Americans had one thousand killed and two thousand wounded or taken; Gates himself was pursued 25 miles and never stopt till he got 120 miles from the field of action, where he is again collecting the fugitives."

Gates was then superseded by Nathaniel Greene, the most able American general after Washington himself.

"Sept. 5. The militia who have been twice call'd on are again ordered home. The rebel leaders appear a good deal confus'd and I believe do not know what plan to fall on to keep up their adherents' spirits. May Discord prevail in their councils and Timidity fall on their troops."

"Sept. 10. A French recruiting party is at present beating up this town for Hussars (or Light Horse); they offer twenty guineas bounty. An American party who were here lately gave six guineas at enlistment and a promise of 300 acres of land at the conclusion of the war. They pickt up 14 men out of this town, mostly deserters—there are above a thousand German deserters settled at different farm houses within 30 miles of this town."

This indicates that, of the many Hessian prisoners of war scattered through Lancaster County, a few at least enlisted against the British who brought them to America.

"Sept. 16. A detachment of British troops have attacked the Spanish settlements in South America and it is said have been joined by numbers of the Mexicans who wanted to shake off the Spanish yoke—this will be a proper punishment for Spain's perfidy."

"Sept. 18. Remarkable for nothing but the anniversary of my captivity—having been three years a prisoner."

"Sept. 26. The Indians have committed such outrages in the back countries and are in such force that the whole country are in alarm. A detachment from Canada have taken Fort Anne and Fort George and carried off their garrisons."

Treason of Benedict Arnold

"Sept. 29. The people are much alarmed at the defection of Genl Arnold who is reported to have gone to New York and joined our troops. The story told on this occasion is this—Arnold has long carried on a private correspondence with Sir H. Clinton, at the conclusion of which he agreed to deliver up West Point (on the North River), where he commanded, to the British. Two or three days before the plot was to take place Arnold requested an intelligence officer might be sent him (in disguise) for the more perfect settling the scheme of operation, and to prevent mistakes in the execution. Major J. André went and concluded the business but unfortunately in returning poor André was taken by three militia men and papers found on him disclosing the whole affair. Arnold hearing of André's capture made his escape to one of our ships of war which lay near his post. It is imagined André will be hanged for a spy."

“October 3. Arnold’s flight is certainly true. The affair was so well concerted that Washington and le Marquis de La Fayette were to have been taken. The ship to which Arnold retired (after it was discovered) had 400 men concealed in her hold—these were to have attacked the Fort in the night, on which Arnold would have immediately surrendered, and Sir H. Clinton had formed measures to arrive in the morning with a considerable force and confirm the possession. It is said by the rebels themselves that the stroke would have ruin’d them. Washington has offered to deliver up André for Arnold.”

“Oct. 10. Major André was certainly hanged on the 2nd of this month. He died with such fortitude that it has drawn the admiration of his foes. When asked at the gallows if he had anything to say, he express’d a wish that his death had been more honourable, But Gentlemen, adds he (speaking to the rebel officers who stood around him), as that wish is futile and my request of being shot (for publick ends) has been denied—I call on you all to bear witness that I die like a brave man. Then with an unmoved countenance he tyed a handkerchief over his eyes—and put the cord round his neck. He was dress’d in full regimentals and was executed pursuant to the sentence of a Court Martial compos’d of general officers. Thus has a man universally beloved by all that knew him and publickly esteemed by all that heard of him, endowed with great natural parts, improved by education and travel and who from his youth (being only five or six and twenty) promis’d to make a distinguished figure in the military line, fallen a victim and graced the triumph of bloody, unjust, and unnatural rebellion—cut off too by an ignominious death (if that can be call’d ignominy to die in an attempt to serve his country and King). He was Adjutant General, chief aide de camp to Sir H. Clinton and a major of Foot.”

This account of the Arnold-André affair is of unique interest; for it was written, at the moment of the tragedy, by a man lodging in the same room which had earlier been occupied by Major André. Caleb Cope, landlord both to André and Hughes, as later evidence will show, had an affectionate regard for Hughes, as he doubtless had for André. Could the diarist but have recorded his conversation with Cope on this great figure of the American Revolution—Major André, and his tragic end.

“Oct. 12. One of our officers turn’d mad and jump’t into the water to drown himself—being suspected he had been followed by two officers who just came time enough to save him.”

This was probably a reaction of the André affair.

“Oct. 14. One Reed, the titular governor of the Province, arrived here. He is on tour to investigate the state of the Colony. The people forebode no good from his visit as it seems he does not think them taxed sufficiently—this town raises 100,000 pounds yearly.”

Joseph Reed, President of Pennsylvania from 1778 to 1781, correspondence shows, was in frequent contact with William Henry, of Lancaster, who was Reed’s financial adviser on the alarming financial condition of the country. Doubtless he consulted with Henry on this visit of October 14, 1780.

“Oct. 17. The Indians still continuing troublesome, the first class or company of every battalion are ordered to garrison the most exposed towns. Those belonging to this town marched this morn—N. B. the militia are divided into eight classes.”

This entry is only further evidence of prolonged troubles with the Indians on the frontiers, even seventeen years after the last remnant of the Conestoga Indians had been massacred in the Lancaster jail-yard by the Paxton Boys.

“Oct. 21. The report of this day entirely contradicts that of the 19; for they now say that the Commissioners have settled the cartel and that we are already exchanged—a little time will clear up the matter. The officer who lost his senses by proper applications has recovered his reason.

Oct. 23. The Tories give out that two American generals and some of the Congress have deserted to New York and that Mr. Laurens—late President of Congress—was taken going to France and all his papers secured, which has given our Ministry an insight to all their private negotiations.”

The English editor says of this: “Henry Laurens left for Holland in August 1780 and was taken at sea. His papers revealed the existence of negotiations with the Dutch. This precipitated the actual declaration of war with Holland in December 1780.”

Henry Laurens had stopped at the Zum Anker Inn at Litzitz on his way to the meeting of Continental Congress at Lancaster, September 27, 1777.

“Oct. 25. We had bonfires and great rejoicings last night — occasioned by the news of a victory gained over a detachment of our troops in South Carolina. The rebels say we lost 1000 men.”

Ferguson’s defeat at King’s Mountain, which did much to offset American gloom over Camden.

“Oct. 31. Thunder, lightning and hail storm—followed by a deep snow.”

“Nov. 7. Received a bill of three months pay from New York and at the same time a letter informing us of an exchange being agreed to.”

“Nov. 14. Some American officers calling the 17th Regt, who were taken at Stony Point, a parcel of cowards, it was near producing a general duel; but the Americans apologising for the expression and attributing it to their being drunk, the affair terminated.”

“Nov. 18. Col. Skinner—an American Commissary—arrived with the agreeable intelligence of our being all to be exchanged, and tells us we may go off to New York when it suits our conveniency and we can get our debts settled—this last will give me some trouble.”

“Nov. 21. Have settled my affairs by drawing a bill on New York at 12 per cent discount. Caleb Cope (my landlord) insisted on treating me with wine this even—as it was to be my last night; but his head being weak the juice of the grape has been too powerful for Cope’s spirit.”

This really seems to have been an hilarious fare-well party, there at the northeast corner of Lime and Grant streets. This, and the next entry, indicate Cope’s warm hospitality to Ensign Hughes.

“Nov. 22. Left Lancaster in company with Brown; Cope (mine host) insisted on seeing us six miles in our way which contrary to our desire he performed. We are on foot with a servant carrying our road apparel in a knapsack. Our parole extends to Elizabethtown [New Jersey] where we are to deliver ourselves up to a Major Adams—the rebel Commissary. We began our journey a little after 12 o’clock and before 5 had reacht Adamstown, which is 21 mile—put up for the night at a small tavern with good accommodations, and a civil landlord, though a great rebel.”

Then to Reading, 11 miles beyond which, on the Allentown road, they stopped at a "lonely public house." Here, "Our host is a Dutchman and the most laughable droll fellow I ever met. He gives us the best his house affords—which is no great things." This is his first use of the word Dutchman.

From Allentown they went through Bethlehem, Easton and Bound Brook to Elizabeth (town), where they arrived, November 29. Thence to New York, from which he sailed to England, June 14, 1781.

At Bologne, France

In January 1784 he writes: "A feu de joie was fired and Te Deum sung for the peace, which was finally settled between Britain, on one hand, and France, Spain, Holland, and America on the other, by which America was declared independent by Great Britain, who lost by the war her blood, her treasure, and an empire, owing to a cursed faction and weak ministers."

Thomas Hughes, Lancaster's notable British diarist, died in 1789, at the age of thirty, "of consumption."