

The Lost Cow

by Janice Eichholtz Rodriguez

An item of considerable interest appeared in Christopher Sauer's German language newspaper, *Pennsylvanische Berichte*, issue of 16 April 1749, translated as follows.

"Jacob Eichholtz, inn-keeper of the Plow Inn, Lancaster, makes known that last August he lost a cow. She is big and brown, has a white star on her forehead and on her rump has a white spot, also on the fore part of her back a white spot. She has a moderate size bell with a new strap and the bell is marked with I E E. Whoever brings the cow back shall have 10 shillings besides a small fee for expenses."

The writer feels a sincere sympathy for Great-great-great-great-grandfather (Johan) Jacob, judging it extremely doubtful his cow would be returned after being lost, strayed—or possibly stolen—from August of one year to April of the next.

In 1749, a cow was scarce enough and valuable enough as a piece of property that she was not readily replaceable. Not native to the North American continent, the first cows were brought from their respective homelands by the first Dutch and English settlers. Each family, by necessity, had to be self-sufficient for its food supply; thus each cow was treasured as a source of milk and meat, and for her ability to reproduce her kind, which meant more wealth for her owner. Oxen, also, had great value, being used as beasts of burden for plowing, breaking new roads, moving household possessions, and similar heavy labor. Even as late as 1800 in America, oxen still did heavy hauling, and only gradually were supplanted by the horse.

Early tax records indicate a tax upon cattle was one of the first—if not *the* first item of wealth to be so taxed. A levy against the owner of even "one cattle" appears time and time again in these early tax records. Thus, the number of cows a man possessed was the measure of his wealth. The loss of even one of them was indeed a serious loss, and so gave reason to the appearance of such advertisements.

These advertisements, for lost cows, as well as for runaway servants and unlocated relatives were inserted free of charge, as a service to his countryman, by Christopher Sauer, publisher of the *Pennsylvanische Berichtsche*.² His papers circulated via travelers, all along the Highway from Philadelphia and Germantown to Lancaster, the latter being the farthestmost inland settlement.

To the historical and family researcher, this particular advertisement is of importance beyond its value as an advertisement—for it identifies (Johan) Jacob Eichholtz as the landlord of the Plow Inn in Lancaster in 1749. There were many early inns that carried the name of the Plow, or Plough. But one in particular, within the Boro of Lancaster, was mentioned by several historians, yet without identification of its early owners or operators.

The well-known Plow stood at the North East corner of West King St. and Charlotte St., lot #471 on the original Hamilton Tract Plan of Lancaster Boro. In a study made of the original lot owners by M. Luther Heisey and presented before the Lancaster County Historical Society, 1942, the first holder of lot #471 was Robert Moore, assigned 28 Dec., 1785.³ The explanation is given that where the date was listed as being later than 1745, no earlier record could be found for that lot.

Reviewing the ground rent plan under which lots were "sold" from the Hamilton Tract, the person who paid the ground rent, or who was responsible for such payment, was the person to whom it was recorded as "assigned".

In a later study by Clyde L. Groff of Lancaster and Philip Bedient of Franklin and Marshall College and others, still in process and on file in the Lancaster County Historical Society, in which deeds, Orphans Court records, lists of ground rents, etc. were utilized, this property was charged to Robert Moore, then Robert Moore "and others" up to 1807. In that year it was charged to Jacob Ackerman, and thereafter remained in the Ackerman family for a number of years.

The Plow was patronized by many prominent people of the mid-eighteenth century and later. W. U. Hensel, in his address on Jacob Eichholtz, Painter, delivered 22 Nov. 1912 before the Lancaster County Historical Society and the Iris Club, praised "the ancient Plow on West King, which offered entertainment for man or beast, greeted those wearied with the journey from the far West."⁴ He named no owner or innkeeper, as he had done in referring to some other inns and taverns.

At the time of the razing of the Plow, the Lancaster Sunday News, 6 April 1924 carried a feature, lamenting its passing as the last of many famous old inns and gave the date of its erection as 1748. This date is also given by D. B. Landis in his article on old Lancaster houses in the L.C.H.S. Journal, 1922. The earlier date of 1745 is inscribed on the bronze plaque placed on the front of the present building, and further claims that "on its register were the names of General George Washington and General Lafayette. When General Lafayette made his memorable visit here in 1825, he was banqueted at this splendid hostelry."

But, after studying all available accounts of the visits of Gener-

als Washington and Lafayette to Lancaster, this writer must conclude, with William Frederick Worner that there is no reliable evidence to support the claims recorded on the plaque.⁵ To the true historian, the disclaiming of this legend in favor of accuracy in no way detracts from the rightful importance of the Plow.

It is not unreasonable to believe that (Johan) Jacob Eichholtz, father of Leonard Eichholtz, innkeeper of the Bull, grandfather of Jacob Eichholtz, well-known portrait painter, and progenitor of a long line of descendents, might well have been the innkeeper of the Plow in 1749, even though not its owner. Of record, he had purchased a number of properties in the original Hamilton Tract, including lot #109, midway between Orange and Chestnut Sts. on the E. side of Queen.⁶ This lot was absorbed into the Brunswick Hotel property, then most recently, into the Hilton Inn. Others were #250 at the N.W. corner of Prince and Walnut;⁷ #271 at the S.W. corner of Prince and Grant;⁸ a ten-acre tract of farmland lying in Lancaster Township to the North of the boro.⁹ At later dates he acquired thirteen and a third acres in Bethelstown, to the S.W. of the boro;¹⁰ lot #382 on the S. side of W. King St., near Mulberry;¹¹ and #229 on the S. side of W. King, one door E. from Prince.¹² This latter was the family home at the time of the death of Johan Jacob. (1760)

The date of purchase of #250—23 Dec. 1749—is of direct significance to the subject of this paper. Eichholtz had previously sold to Thomas Cookson, the first Chief Burgess, the two five-acre tracts to the North of the boro—26 April, 1749.¹³ In the indenture covering the transaction, he was identified as a “tavern-keeper,” and “of Lancaster Boro.” Eight months later he purchased #250 from James Hamilton, to which Cookson was witness. A condition of this purchase was “to erect a substantial dwelling house at own cost and charges, of dimension 20 ft. square at least, with a good chimney of brick or stone to be laid in with lime or sand within a space of two years from the first day of May last past.”

H. Ray Woerner, in his article on Taverns of Early Lancaster writets, “The Flying Angel was a small hotel on the northwest corner of N. Prince and Walnut Sts. in 1789, and perhaps many years before this.”¹⁴ This property was still charged to Jacob Eichholtz in 1769, which would have been to Jacob Jr. (1740-1804) the eldest son of Johan Jacob who was deceased 26 July, 1760. In 1771, Jacob Jr. sold furnishings and equipment obviously of a tavern to his mother Catharine (widow of Johan Jacob), who immediately sold them to another son, Leonard—he who became well-known as the keeper of the Bull at the corner of E. King and Christian St.¹⁵ Leonard was first licensed as an innkeeper that same year, 1771, being the year in which he became twenty-one.¹⁷

Thus, it is concluded that Johan Jacob Eichholtz did indeed build his substantial dwelling house—learned from a later deed to have been of brick—and that it became a tavern, operated by him following his first period at the Plow, then later by others. In look-

ing back to the earlier dates, 16 April, 1749, when he advertised for his cow, and 26 April, 1749, when he sold acreage to Thomas Cookson, he was already identified as an innkeeper in both of the pertinent documents, and specifically, in the advertisement, as "innkeeper of the Plow Inn, Lancaster."

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Media, Pa. March, 1971

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Original issues of the *Pennsylvanische Berichte* are located in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa. MMS. Dept.
Index reference to individual items are in the Genealogical Society of Penna, Phila. Pa. VG 1675 *Genealogical Data Relating to the German Settlers of Penna. and adjacent territory—Advertisements Published in Phila. and Germantown, 1743-1800*, compiled by Edward W. Hocker. Item relating to Jacob Eichholtz, P. 13.
- ² *Penna. German Society*, vol. 19, part XXIII, p. 35
Early German Newspapers, Daniel Miller
- ³ *Journal*, LCHS vol. XLVI, no. 2&3, 1942, pp. 45-82
- ⁴ *Journal*, LCHS vol. XVI, no. 10, p. 12, 1912
- ⁵ *Journal*, LCHS vol. XXXVII, no. 8, p. 216, 1933
- ⁶ *Journal*, LCHS as in footnote 3. and the more recent study, plotting and analysis of the Hamilton tract by Clyde L. Groff, Philip Bedient, et al, filed at LCHS.
- ⁷ *Lanc. Co., Deed Bk. I*, p. 129, 23 Dec. 1749
- ⁸ *Lanc. Co., Deed Bk. R.* p. 325, 7 May, 1748
- ⁹ *Lanc. Co., Deed Bk. I* p. 158, 14 Jan. 1740
- ¹⁰ *Lanc. Co., Deed Bk. PP.* p. 742, 22 Dec. 1759 and *Lanc. Co., Deed Bk. EE.* p. 226, 1 May, 1760
- ¹¹ *Lanc., Co., Deed Bk. 4* p. 602, 23 Feb. 1753
- ¹² *Lanc. Co., Deed Bk. S* p. 656, 26 Oct., 1769, as of 23 Oct. 1758
- ¹³ *Lanc. Co., Deed Bk. EE* p. 451, 26 Apr. 1749
- ¹⁴ *Journal*, LCHS vol. 73, no. 2, p. 80
- ¹⁵ Hamilton Tract records.
- ¹⁶ *Lanc. Co. Deed Bk. N.*, p. 250—Bill of Sale (1) Jacob Eigholtz (sic) to Catharina Eigholtz 3 May, 1771. (2) Catharine Eigholtz (sic) to Leonard Eigholtz 30 Nov. 1771. Both recorded 6 Dec. 1771.
- ¹⁷ Ellis & Evans, *History of Lancaster Co.* 1883 p. 373