

## **John Passmore: Lancaster's First Mayor and his Councils**

**by Melvern R. Evans, Jr.**

**F**rom its beginning as a borough in 1742, Lancaster had been under "burgess rule." The early borough government consisted of a high burgess, a deputy called simply a "burgess," and six assistant burgesses. These eight citizens plus the town clerk formed the executive and legislative authority for the young borough. Actually there was not too much these officials were empowered to do other than keep peace among the citizenry by providing streets, night watchmen, and passing ordinances to prevent exploitation of one group of citizens by another. Fire safety and rules for market operation were important matters for their attention.

Seventy-six years later, the borough had grown to the extent the citizens desired it be chartered as a city. During its time as a borough, the community had earned the reputation of being the largest inland town in the American Colonies. Petitioning the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for status as a city in March 1818, the citizens were not unmindful that the Governor was a native of Lancaster, and that his wife, Mary, was a daughter of the famed Colonel Mathias Slough, one of Lancaster's most influential innkeepers and politicians. Another prominent family was that of John Passmore. Passmore's second wife, Mary Clarkson, and Mary Slough Snyder would have been associated in all the town's social and civic functions. Both families were members of St. James's Episcopal Church. Moreover, before she became Simon Snyder's third wife in 1814, Mary Slough had been married to Alexander Scott, another influential countian.

Two months after the legislature received the petition to charter Lancaster as a city, Governor Snyder enthusiastically signed the act, and appointed John Passmore as the city's first mayor.

Lancaster became Pennsylvania's third city, Pittsburgh having been chartered two years previous to Lancaster. Philadelphia was chartered as a city in 1691.

At the time of transition Lancaster had 1600 taxables and a population of about 6500 souls. The new mayor had his work cut out for himself: he was expected to act as chief executive and administrative officer, head the police department, and sit on the bench as judge — the city's chief magistrate. Evidently no one was concerned about "conflicts of interest" in those days!

The city charter created two legislative bodies: a Select Council (the upper house), modeled after the State Senate, and a Common Council (the lower house), similar to the House of Representatives. Mayor Passmore was a giant of a man, tipping the scales at nearly 500 pounds. He was born January 12, 1774, in Delaware, a son of William Passmore. He was admitted to the Lancaster Bar in 1791 and became prothonotary for the Lancaster district of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in 1809. Prior to being mayor he served as alderman in the northeast ward. Passmore was a heavy smoker, and once fined himself 20 shillings for puffing away on public streets in violation of an early ordinance. His first wife was Elizabeth Gilfin Alexander, who was a widow when she married Passmore on December 18, 1809. On January 2, 1817, he married Mary Clarkson, daughter of the Reverend Joseph Clarkson, rector of St. James's. The Passmores made their home at 247 East Orange Street, a fine brick house built by Thomas Poultney, and first occupied by Dr. Christian Neff. The Passmore house at the northwestern corner of East Orange and North Shippen streets remains to this day a handsome simplified Georgian example of architecture. The Passmore children were George and John G. who died as children; Joseph and William, who became clergymen; and Grace who died in her 32nd year.

John Passmore died in October 1827, and owing to his enormous size, special arrangements had to be made to construct a coffin and transport the remains to St. James's churchyard for burial. He served a two-year term. Political parties were in a state of flux at the time, the old Federalists gradually dying out and their more youthful adherents associating themselves with the more conservative of the several opposing groups. Thomas Jefferson's "Anti-Federalist" or Republican Party was going through a reshaping process, with the more nationalist-minded followers calling themselves Jeffersonian Republicans, Federal Republicans, and later, National Republicans. It was to this faction that the formerly Federalist James Buchanan allied himself. The more radical group called itself Democratic Republicans, and later, with Andrew Jackson as its

standard-bearer, the Democratic Party. Passmore was a Federal Republican.

The next mayor, Samuel Carpenter, served from 1821 to 1823; he was a Jeffersonian Republican. From 1824 to 1830 the mayor was Nathaniel Lightner, a Jacksonian Democrat. Passmore, Carpenter, and Lightner were elected by the councils, although Passmore served at the beginning as an interim mayor appointed by the Governor.

The voters of each of the four wards were directed to meet at specified public houses to select candidates for the Select and Common Council seats. Following this selection, all the candidates were submitted to the city electorate, with these results:

Ward	Select Council	Votes	Common Council	Votes
Northeast	Robert Coleman	322	Adam Reigart, Jr.	321
	Samuel Humes	323	Jacob Duchman	280
	Samuel Slaymaker	294	Philip Heitshu	260
Northwest			John Bomberger	251
	William Kirkpatrick	302	Jacob Sherer	315
	William Dickson	256	Ingham Wood	263
			George Musser, Jr.	285
Southeast			John Weaver	258
	John Hubley	325	John Reynolds	261
	Jacob Leman	274	Jeremiah Mosher	318
			Luke Brown	269
Southwest			Jacob Eichholtz	275
	John F. Steinman, Jr.	275	George Brungard	264
	William Jenkins	310	John Christ	168
		Jasper Yeates Smith	250	

All were elected in this uncontested election. John Hubley was chosen as President of the Select Council, and Adam Reigart was picked to head the Common Council. Peter Reed originally had been nominated for a Southeast Ward Common Council seat, but he declined, and Luke Brown replaced him. A city treasurer was elected, and numerous ordinances were adopted to implement the provisions of the city charter. Casper Shaffner was the first treasurer.

The aldermen mentioned in the charter had as their responsibility assisting the mayor in the administration of justice, what later would be called the minor judiciary with its justices of the peace. In some cities aldermen are councilmen. The mayor in Lancaster was to appoint a high constable and four assistants. They were the early police force, but their

duties were more extensive, serving the city much as the sheriff and his deputies did in the County.

The call that went out to all electors to gather at hotels in each of the four wards could have resulted in a number of mass meetings in which the will of the "people" could have put persons into nomination who were not of highest caliber. Indifference and apathy were just as prevalent then as today. Those who showed up at the hotels had a genuine interest in selecting the city's most worthwhile and experienced leaders. The candidates chosen knew each other, and had worked together on numerous committees and many associations. Many were members of Masonic Lodge No. 43 and one of the several prestigious volunteer fire companies such as the Union, Friendship, or Sun.

For purposes of maintaining the city streets, Lancaster was divided into two wards, East and West, with a street commissioner in each ward, appointed by the Councils. To regulate the grades and curblines of the streets and lots, three regulators also were chosen by the councils.

An interesting early ordinance provided that the corporation seal used by the borough of Lancaster be continued in use until a new city seal could be made.

Every chain has its weak link, and Common Council was no exception according to a comment in the *Lancaster Journal*, that one member, designated as the "tail of the Body Corporate," spoke only German and was not the least bit fluent in English, and therefore was mute during the proceedings!

To illustrate the caliber of members of the first Councils, brief sketches follow:

### **The Select Council**

**Robert Coleman**, aged 70, was the oldest council member. He was born in Ireland in November 1748, and came to Pennsylvania when he was 16 years old. His energy, ambition, shrewdness and intelligence soon brought him up through the ranks of clerk to an ironmaster to become the wealthiest ironmaster in Pennsylvania. He owned numerous charcoal iron furnaces and forges. He was a director of the Lancaster Branch of the Bank of Pennsylvania, and for 20 years served as associate judge of the Court of Common Pleas. Coleman was warden and vestryman of St. James's Episcopal Church from 1818 to 1824. He rented pew #49. He married Ann Old on October 4, 1773; his bride's family was of Welsh ancestry and had become prominent in ironmaking and forging in eastern Lancaster County. (In the days before corporate "take-overs" were known, ironmasters formed industrial dynasties through the marriages of their children.) Robert Coleman's daughter, Ann, became engaged to James Buchanan, then a promis-



**Robert Coleman**

ing young attorney in Lancaster, later to become President of the United States. The marriage never materialized and Ann died from an overdose of a drug. Her sister, Sarah, fell in love with the Reverend William Muhlenberg, rector of St. James's, much to her father's displeasure. She, too, died in the same manner as Ann. Both men never married; one became President, the other a prominent bishop of the Episcopal Church.

**William Jenkins** served the council at the age of 39. He was born in Lancaster County on July 7, 1779, a son of David and Martha Armour Jenkins. The Jenkins family, of Welsh ancestry, was interested in iron-making and forging. He was graduated from Princeton in 1797 and began his career in law in 1801. He was a trustee of the Lancaster County Academy and Franklin College. Jenkins was president of the Farmers Bank in Lancaster. In 1845 he served as recorder of the Mayor's Court. He was an active member of St. James's Church, renting pew #51. William Jenkins died May 24, 1853.

**John Frederick Steinman, Jr.** was 29 when the council was formed. He was born in Lancaster County on December 19, 1789, a son of John F. and Sibilla Mayer Steinman. He began working in his father's hardware store at an early age and eventually succeeded him. He was a director of the Farmers Bank in Lancaster, a manager of the Conestoga Navigation Company and

found time to serve as a school director. Steinman was the first president of the Conestoga Steam Cotton Mills on South Prince Street. He was married twice; first, to Maria Gill on September 5, 1811, and second, to Mary Smith Fahnestock in 1824. He died in October 1884. His father had been a burgess when Lancaster was a borough.

**Samuel Humes** was born in 1753. He was a tanner. His residence was on Donegal Street, more familiarly known as North Queen Street. He served as assistant burgess of Lancaster borough 1799, 1803, and 1804. Humes was treasurer of the Sun Fire Company in 1798. Later he was a school director. In the First Presbyterian Church he was an elder and trustee. Humes married Mary Hamilton, and they reared eleven children. Humes saw military service in Captain James Mercer's Leacock Company, and in the 6th Company, 8th Battalion under Captain John Miller. He was a Mason in Lodge #43. He died August 23, 1836.

**William Kirkpatrick** was born about 1772 and for 26 years was a merchant on North Queen Street. He served as assistant town clerk, 1813-1815. Kirkpatrick was a director of the Branch Bank of Pennsylvania and the Columbia Bank. In 1817 he was vice president of the Lancaster County American Society for the promotion of domestic manufacturing and national industry. In 1832 he established a business for making portable threshing machines. Kirkpatrick was active in First Presbyterian Church. He was elected a number of times Worshipful Master of Masonic Lodge No. 43. On November 1, 1792, he married Elizabeth Hoofnagel (Huffnagle); they had no children. He died August 18, 1838.

**Samuel Slaymaker**, scion of one of the oldest and respected German families, was born April 14, 1774, the son of Henry and Faithful Richardson Slaymaker. Samuel and his brothers, Amos and Henry, were partners in the hostelry business and operated a stage line between Lancaster and Philadelphia. The Slaymaker family was active in the Presbyterian Church. Samuel's wife, Ann Cochran, whom he married on June 17, 1796, and their children, survived him at his death on April 3, 1830.

**Jacob Leman** was born in 1756, a son of Daniel and Mary Ferree Leman. He operated a brewery along East Mifflin Street near South Christian Street. The brewery had been established by John Musser, Jr., and later (1787) was used temporarily by Franklin College until more appropriate quarters could be found for the fledgling preparatory school. During the Revolutionary War Leman served with the Pequea Rangers. In 1792 he married Catharine Eichholtz, who was the sister of the artist, Jacob Eichholtz. Jacob was the father of Henry Eichholtz Leman, the gun manufacturer. The Lemans and the Ferrees were French Huguenots. Jacob died in 1835.

**William Dickson** was born in 1765, a son of William and Mary Derry Dickson. He was a typical "hard-nosed, no-nonsense" type of newspaper

editor. From 1811 to 1812 he was county treasurer, and in 1812 he served as town clerk. Dickson was assistant burgess in 1815-1816. He also served as captain of the Lancaster Phalanx militia. He and his brother, Robert, published the Lancaster weekly *Intelligencer*, the first issue coming off the press in July 1799. His paper supported Jeffersonian Republicanism in opposition to the Federalist *Lancaster Journal*. Robert died in 1802, and William carried on the newspaper himself. In the bitter political campaigns of the early 1800s, editors often indulged in violent and immoderate accusations, and William was no exception. He blundered badly when he published an article alleging corrupt overtures made to Pennsylvania Senator Henry Wertz of Bedford County by the Governor's secretary. A libel suit promptly followed and Dickson was found guilty. He was sentenced to three months in the county prison and fined \$500 and costs. His loyal friends paid the fine and costs, and even gave him a fine banquet behind the prison bars! He continued to edit his newspaper while in jail, his wife carrying copy back to the press. William died January 10, 1823, and his widow, Mary McIlvain Dickson, continued editing and publishing the *Intelligencer*, aided by her son-in-law, Gunning Bedford, until his death in 1826. Mary Dickson served for 21 years as postmistress of the city.

**John Hubley** was the second child of seven born to Michael Hubley and Rosina Stumpf. He was born December 25, 1747. He began the practice of law in 1769, and during the Revolution Hubley served as a major and was Commissary of Stores. In 1777 he was prothonotary of the Court of Common Pleas. Hubley also was a director of the Branch Bank of Pennsylvania, and was a trustee of Franklin College. In 1810 he was county treasurer. Hubley married Maria Magdalena Lauman, daughter of Ludwig (Lewis) Lauman, a prominent early citizen, on November 2, 1770, and they had a family of sixteen children. Hubley died in January, 1821.

## The Common Council

Members of the Common Council were:

**Adam Reigart, Jr.** was born June 17, 1765, the son of Colonel Adam Reigart and Catharine Zimmerman. He assisted his father in operating the Sign of the Grape, center of Revolutionary activity in Lancaster. He served as a director of the Branch Bank of Pennsylvania, president of the Lancaster-Susquehanna Insurance Company, and was a justice of the peace in 1811. His interests in internal improvements were manifested in his position as manager of several turnpike companies and as president of the Conestoga Navigation Company, a firm that developed and operated a slackwater canal along the Conestoga River between Lancaster and Safe Harbor. He served on the Board of the Lancaster County Academy, Franklin College, and the Lancaster School District. Reigart was president



**Adam Reigart, Jr.**

of the Union Fire Co. No. 1 from 1813 until his death in 1844. Adam married Maria Wager in May, 1791. Their home was the stone house built by Henry Musser at South Ann and Chesapeake streets. They were members of St. James's Church.

**Jacob Duchman** was born about 1775. He was the proprietor of the Fountain Inn, Lampeter Township. In June 1805 he acquired the Sign of the Leopard from the Diffenderfer family, and operated this city hotel until 1813 when his son succeeded him. The Leopard hotel was an important stage line terminal for Philadelphia travellers. He was a commissioner for the Lancaster Bank Trading Company, and served as county commissioner in 1820. The Duchman family attended St. James's Church. He owned considerable land in eastern Lancaster city.

**Philip Heitshu** was born in 1764, a son of Jacob Heitshu. He was a hatter by trade. Heitshu married Catharine Ruppert at Reading, Pa. in 1784, and after a short period in New Holland, they moved to Lancaster in 1806 where Philip established a hat factory. He died November 11, 1846.

**John Bomberger** was born in 1768, and married Anna Maria Hoofnagel (Huffnagle). They were the parents of George Hoofnagel Bomberger (1794-1863). Little is known about Bomberger's civic activities.

**Jacob Sherer** appeared on the 1817 tax rolls as a distiller. He was born about 1784. According to First Reformed Church records he married Maria



Messerschmidt on December 11, 1804; she was the daughter of George Messerschmidt, a tailor.

**Ingham Wood** was a potter. He was the first secretary and later a vice president of the Mechanics Society. Wood served on the committee to consider oppressive depreciation of the monetary medium in Lancaster County in October 1818.

**George Musser, Jr.** was born July 11, 1777, a son of George and Christina Young Musser. Father and son were tanners. George Musser, Jr. served as an alderman and justice of the peace. During the War of 1812 he was a captain of a rifle company assigned to Lt. Col. William Hamilton's 2nd Brigade in the 2nd Rifle Regiment, General Watson's Division. His company saw service in Baltimore from September 5, 1814 to December 1814. In 1814 he was elected county treasurer, and later he was president of the Lancaster School Board. He married Mary Graff in May 1807; and in October 1817, he married Sarah Graeff. He lived at the corner of Prince and Orange streets.

**John Weaver, Jr.** was born in September 1780. He was a turner by trade. He served as a private in the 5th Battalion, 1st Brigade of Pennsylvania Militia in the War of 1812. First Reformed Church records indicate he married Magdalena Geltmacher on April 16, 1802.

**John Reynolds** was born March 30, 1787, a son of William and Catharine Lefever Reynolds. He served as editor of the *Lancaster Journal*. He was a trustee of the Lancaster County Academy, and served as county treasurer in 1827-1829. In latter years he managed the Cornwall Iron Ore mines. Reynolds was a member of St. James's Church. He married Lydia Moore on June 17, 1813, and they had 13 children of which four died in infancy. One son, John Fulton Reynolds, became a major general, and was killed during the Battle of Gettysburg. Another son, William, became an admiral in the U.S. Navy; and a third son, James, became paymaster general of the Pennsylvania Militia during the War Between the States. John died in Baltimore on May 11, 1853.

**Jeremiah Mosher** was born at Roxbury, Massachusetts, in 1753. He learned the trade of blacksmith, but started a military career early, becoming a brigadier general. After being wounded at the Battle of Brandywine, he was sent to Lancaster to recover, and he remained here. In 1812-1813 he was county coroner, and in 1815-1818 served in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. He was an active member of the Union Fire Company No. 1, and was a founder of the Mechanics Society. Mosher was Worshipful Master of Lodge No. 43 in 1795-1796 and again from 1809 to 1811. He also was one of the earliest members of Royal Arch Chapter, No. 43. In addition to his numerous civic, political, and Masonic duties, he was Lancaster's busiest blacksmith, keeping the stage coaches in repair and the teams shod.

**Luke Brown** was a coachmaker. He was born about 1780, son of Charles Brown. His shop was located at South Duke and Vine streets. Brown was a member of the Mechanics Society. When Lacastrians were requested to select Common Councilmen, Peter Reed was chosen, but he declined. Luke Brown then replaced him. He died intestate in 1854.

**Jacob Eichholtz** was born in 1776, a son of Leonard and Catharine Mayer Eichholtz. He was educated at Franklin College and then established a coppersmithing and tinware business. At an early age he showed great talent in painting, and eventually became a prominent portrait artist, accepting commissions from the better sort in eastern Pennsylvania and Maryland. Today his portraits are extremely valuable. The Lancaster County Historical Society owns a large number of Eichholtz paintings which it treasures highly. Eichholtz died in 1842.

**George Brungard** was a carpenter and developer. In 1817 he served as assistant burgess. In 1814 he speculated in purchasing 48 acres in Leacock Township which he intended to divide into 150 lots, selling for \$250 each. The venture failed. The poor we always have had with us, and in 1805, before there were any relief or welfare agencies to care for the poor, George Brungard solicited donations throughout the southwest ward.

**John Christ** was born January 18, 1785. He was a cabinetmaker. He served in the 2nd Brigade, Captain Jacob Snyder's Company, Lt. Col. John Lutz's 2nd Regiment, of the Pennsylvania Militia, during the War of 1812 at Baltimore. On July 19, 1808 he married Margaret Klein. They had two daughters: Mary (Mrs. David Gockley), and Elizabeth (Mrs. John Shroder). He died July 16, 1850, and is buried at Woodward Hill Cemetery.

**Jasper Yeates Smith** was born March 15, 1792, a son of Charles and Mary Yeates Smith. Mary was the daughter of Judge Jasper Yeates, and Charles became a prominent attorney, being admitted to the Bar in 1787, and later elevated to the bench when he was appointed president judge of the Ninth Judicial District. His last judicial appointment was as president judge of the Lancaster District Court. Jasper Y. Smith served with Captain George Musser's riflemen during the War of 1812. He was an attorney. He died November 20, 1823, and is buried in St. James's Churchyard.

At least six of the councilmen were Episcopalians, four were Presbyterians, four were German Reformed, and at least two were Lutheran. Seven were members of Masonic Lodge No. 43, and eight were members of Union Fire Co. No. 1. The first mayor's administration spent most of its time and energies getting itself organized and trying to decide what its policies ought to be. Not all the citizens were pleased with the "city" status, and within two years an effort was made to revert to "borough" status. The mayor and his administration were on the horns of

a dilemma: if they tried to improve conditions in Lancaster, they would have to increase taxes and bring about changes — both of which were (and are) extremely unpopular in Lancaster. If they plodded along, choosing a conservative path, they would be accused of doing nothing, and the community would be better off if it were a less expensive borough. Moreover, if the “pro-borough” people succeeded in changing the city back to a borough, all the efforts of the mayor and councils would have been in vain. Truly, the city did not have an auspicious beginning.

After getting off to a shaky start, the first three mayors (Passmore, Carpenter, and Lightner) gradually saw the need for improvements. Not much was accomplished other than giving moral support to citizens’ groups that were demanding improvements. Brick sidewalk paving became mandatory in June 1823. The Union Fire Co. No. 1 led a campaign to have a municipal water supply system built, but this objective was not realized until February 22, 1837. The Union Fire Co. No. 1 first proposed in 1766 that a reservoir be built, and in 1822 the Company put pressure on the city government to install a reservoir, distribution pipes, and pumps. The Passmore and Carpenter administrations were sympathetic to installation of a water system, but the majority of the city’s residents saw the project as expensive and unnecessary. When the water system finally was installed another 63 years passed before filtration and treatment were introduced, the water being delivered through mains and pipes directly from the Conestoga River. The Union Fire Company No. 1 also urged the city to improve street lighting and provide regular police patrols or night watchmen who would give the alarm in case of fire. These suggestions met with the approval of the more progressive citizenry but the rank and file saw these proposals as added costs, higher taxes, and unnecessary.

Those citizens who favored the improvements also took the initiative in creating additional volunteer fire companies, obtaining funds to purchase fire engines, and establishing schools, libraries, and a museum. Thus developed a tradition that if the apathetic and short-sighted public won’t support the improvements leading to a safer and healthier city, one in which the quality of life is recognized as important, volunteer citizens and associations of enlightened residents will have to lead the way in accomplishing such objectives. Across the United States numerous volunteer groups were being formed for these purposes. Lancaster was not unique in that respect. Lyceums, schools, libraries — especially for the young apprentices and working men, and other cultural and educational institutions sprouted rapidly during the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s. The pace would quicken in Lancaster after the arrival of the Columbia & Philadelphia Railroad in 1834.

The fourth mayor of Lancaster probably was the most effective thus far. John Mathiot, Jr. was born in Columbia December 26, 1784, the son of John Mathiot who was a merchant. The mayor’s grandparents were Jean

and Margaret Catherine Bernard Mathiot, French Huguenots that arrived in Lancaster in 1754. Inasmuch as the French "Jean" is John, the mayor in reality was John Mathiot III. From 1807 to 1818 John Mathiot was postmaster of Columbia. He was elected sheriff of Lancaster County in 1818 and served until 1822. He was known for his fairness and ability to solve difficult problems among disputants. Mathiot was an effective executive and was fully attuned to the needs of the community as well as being sympathetic to those groups supporting enlightened views of municipal government. Mathiot married Mary Gonter, and one of their daughters married Dr. Henry Carpenter. In 1831 Mathiot was elected mayor of Lancaster on the Federalist-supported Masonic Democratic ticket, and he was re-elected eleven times, dying in office. At the same time he was mayor he served on the Lancaster School Board, a situation probably envied by recent mayors! Mathiot was Worshipful Master of Masonic Lodge No. 43, and was active in the Union Fire Company No. 1.

Turning back to the first mayor, the city recorder — an office which combined the duties of chief clerk, secretary of the city, and general counsel — was Molton C. Rogers. He, too, was an exceptionally effective official. Born in Delaware in 1785, Rogers was educated in Princeton University. He was admitted to the local Bar in 1811. In 1823 he was named Secretary of the Commonwealth, and in 1826 was appointed a justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Molton Rogers was a Mason in Lodge No. 43, and was a member of the Union Fire Co. No. 1. Rogers married Eliza Jacobs of the Caernarvon Township ironmaking family on June 8, 1821. He died on September 27, 1863. He was a member of St. James's Episcopal Church.

## Appendix

Some of the institutions whose names occur with frequency in citing the memberships and work of the Select and Common Councilmen are listed for the benefit of the reader.

**Lancaster County Academy:** This school was established in 1827 at the northwest corner of Orange and Lime streets in the former Shippen Mansion. At its beginning the school was very successful but by 1837 it had declined and ceased operations.

**Franklin College:** One of two predecessors of Franklin and Marshall College, Franklin College was founded in 1787 to afford young gentlemen of a Pennsylvania-German background an appropriate preparatory education. Despite the title, Franklin College never conferred any degrees nor did it offer college-level instruction until it merged with Marshall College in 1853. The school was held in the Lemman brew house originally, then in the government

storehouse on North Queen Street near James Street, and finally in its own structure on North Lime Street north of East Orange Street.

**Mechanics Society:** This institution was founded in 1829 for the purpose of providing a literary experience for persons who desired to improve their lives through reading and lectures. It had a library of more than 4,000 books, and it sponsored lectures by well-educated local speakers.

**Masonic Lodge No. 43, Free and Accepted Masons (Ancient York Masons),** was constituted in 1785, succeeding an earlier lodge which had become dormant during the Revolution. Masonic activity was evident in Lancaster from its beginning. The town proprietor, James Hamilton, was a prominent Mason, and Benjamin Franklin, another Mason, is recorded as having shipped Masonic materials to be used in Lancaster. The Lodge Hall was built over the market along West King Street adjacent to the old State House, or City Hall. Early in the 1970s Lodge No. 43 along with two other city Masonic Lodges and affiliated organizations moved to the Masonic Center on West Chestnut and North Water streets. The ancient buildings have become the Heritage Center of Lancaster County.

**Lancaster-Susquehanna Insurance Company:** The first local insurance company was incorporated in 1807, and was capitalized with 4,000 shares of stock at \$25 per share.

**Lancaster Bank Trading Company:** The second oldest bank in Lancaster was founded in 1814. Four years later it changed its name to Lancaster Bank. It collapsed in 1857 owing to internal corruption which was revealed by the Panic of 1857.

**Branch Bank of Pennsylvania:** From 1803 to 1840 the Branch Bank of Pennsylvania extended banking credit into Lancaster at its location at the northeast corner of Prince and King streets. After 1840 it was moved back to Philadelphia.

**Farmers Bank:** This locally-owned and controlled bank was established in 1810. It was characterized throughout the nineteenth-century by conservative management and was able to withstand the numerous financial panics and crises of the time. It became the Farmers National Bank, and then after several name changes, transitions, and assumption of trust activities, the Farmers Bank and Trust Company merged with the Lancaster County National Bank to become the Lancaster County Farmers National Bank. More mergers which extended into nearby counties created the National Central Bank, and then the Hamilton Bank. Today it is part of the Core States Bank system.

**Conestoga Navigation Company:** This slackwater canal company was established for the purpose of bringing and sending freight via the Conestoga River between Lancaster and the Susquehanna River canal system. It was begun in 1825, and used nine locks and slackwater pools. Passage on the Susquehanna River between Safe Harbor and the Chesapeake Bay was hazardous, unpredictable, and at times impossible. The canal never was as successful as its promoters had expected. It ceased operating before the Civil War.

**Fire Companies:** The Union Fire Company No. 1 grew out of informal efforts at firefighting by members of the borough government as early as 1742. By 1760 the burgesses had grown weary of carrying the burden of firefighting personally, and they founded the Union Fire Co. No. 1 as a separate entity. Inasmuch as propertied men had the most to lose in a fire, they took the most active part in staffing and operating volunteer fire companies. The Union Fire Co. No. 1 attracted the affluent and influential gentry to its ranks. The Sun Fire Co. began about 1763 and the Friendship Fire Company was founded about the same time. In 1792 the Active Fire Co. was established, followed by the Washington Fire Co. in 1820, the American Fire-Engine and Hose Co. in 1834, the Humane Fire Co. in 1939, the Shiffler Fire Co. in 1852, and the Empire Hook and Ladder Co. in 1856. All the volunteer companies ceased functioning on April 1, 1882, when the Lancaster Fire Department was placed in service as a paid, professional firefighting agency of the city government — the third in Pennsylvania. Only the Union Fire Co. No. 1 has survived, and meets regularly as a historical-commemorative association promoting fire prevention, fire safety, and civic improvement.

**Lancaster School Board:** The Lancaster School Board was established in June 1838 when the Court appointed 14 members to the first Board. Their responsibility was to organize and operate a common school system, free to all students. The Lancaster School District remained unchanged in size until the mid-1960s when the State mandated the merger of the Lancaster Township schools into the city school system.

Editor's Note: Melvern Evans died March 3, 1988, shortly after he worked on this manuscript. He was in his 74th year, and had been retired from the RCA Corporation. He was a member of First Reformed Church. Mr. Evans possessed an intellectual curiosity which found expression in numerous pieces of research, some of which have been published in the *Journal*. We will miss him greatly.