

EARLY LOCAL REFERENCES

The earliest newspaper in America was called *Public Occurrences*, published in Boston, September 25, 1690, but only one number of it was issued. The next was the *Boston News Letter*, published first in 1704, and it had a long career. The next was the *Boston Gazette*, first published December 21, 1719, running some years. The fourth was the *American Weekly Mercury*, first published in Philadelphia, December 22, 1719, by Andrew Bradford, son of William Bradford, Pennsylvania's first printer, whom the austere Quakers drove out of the province very unjustly, and who went to New York and died at the age of ninety-four.

Andrew Bradford's paper, the *Mercury*, therefore, was the third newspaper published in America (since the *Public Occurrence*, of Boston, not surviving over one issue, cannot be called a newspaper). Philadelphia, in issuing the *Mercury* in 1719, gave Pennsylvania its first newspaper a good many years before New York had any newspaper at all. Pennsylvania's next newspaper was the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, first published in Philadelphia by Ben Franklin in 1728. The *Mercury* ran until 1745, and the *Gazette* until after the Revolution.

The series of notes now to be given are from the *Mercury*, and they will be set forth generally without any comment, in chronological order, the date of the issue from which each note is copied verbatim being prefixed to the

note. It should be noted, before setting forth these notes, that the almost complete files of both these early newspapers are found bound in yearly or bi-yearly volumes in the Historical Society Library of the State at Philadelphia, and also (many of them) in the buildings of the Philadelphia Library Association, the main one at Locust and Juniper Streets and the Ridgeway Branch at Broad, near Catharine. The following notes have been literally copied by me at divers times and may be relied upon:

From the American Weekly Mercury.

Issue of January 12, 1719 (1720):

The Governor is pleased with the Assembly, and comments upon the unanimity between the Governor and the Assembly. He says there are orders from England asking the repeal of certain laws.

August 18, 1720:

"A proclamation of Governor Wm. Keith, of the Province, setting forth that 'there is a great demand for a Court of Equity to modify the rigors of law, and that the Assembly has recommended the same; therefore, the Governor will hold such Court at the Court House, in Philadelphia, 25th of August; and the same will remain always open.' "

September 1, 1720:

"The ship Laurel, John Capel, master, from Liverpool, has arrived in the Delaware, with 240 odd Palatines. Come here to settle." This shipload of Palatines is a newly-discovered shipload, it not appearing in the Colonial Records, nor in any other records.

December 27, 1720:

"From a ship in Herring Bay in Maryland we hear 30 odd men ser-

vants have arrived upon account of the hemp manufacture which is intended to be settled hereabout." This is important, because hemp culture was important in our Susquehanna and its tributaries' valleys.

January 31, 1721:

"A lot of 92 malefactors, including Wm. Wrigglesden, who robbed the King's Chapel at Whitehall, are sent to America."

February 14, 1721:

"One hundred and eighty malefactors reached Maryland from Newgate and the Marshalsea. The punishment of hard labor these criminals are sentenced to can be evaded if they muster a small parcel of money to the merchant for their trouble and passage. They are set at liberty as soon as on shore and are made equal with freemen. It is so in this gang; among them is a person who is come over in pomp. He has brought his mistress along, too, who wears rich silk clothes and a gold striking watch. He lives in great splendor at Annapolis, carousing with associates of equal fortune, fortunate enough to buy off his servitude. The only part of the sentence they must obey is not to return to England for many years.

"We may expect some of these wild creatures who could not be brought to civil manners in England to make their traverse into this Province, and settle here. And so we give this public notice. It is a sad case that we cannot be ordered to be populated better than by such absolute villains and loose women as these are proved by their wretched lives and criminal actions to be. By these ways of transporting villains among such a flourishing people, we lessen our improvement and industry by fill-

ing the vacancies of honest men with tricking, thieving and designing rogues. The consequences would be remedied by Great Britain if she were as sensible of them as we are who are made so by living among them.

"Several of these malefactors arrived in Maryland, passed through this (Philadelphia) city on their way to New York, and from there they go to Boston."

I set this article out for two reasons: First, this was one of the grievances which helped bring on the Revolutionary War; and, secondly, some of the malefactors from Maryland were very troublesome along the Susquehanna River. Some of them served on Talbot's raids into Pennsylvania.

May 18, 1721:

Memorial of Governor William Keith, of Pennsylvania, to Colonel Spottswood, Governor of Virginia:

"I am glad that the tributary Indians of Virginia have given solemn promise to the government of Virginia that they will not cross the Potomac, nor the high ridge of mountains extending along the back of Virginia, provided the Indians to the northward of the Potomac will observe the same, and that this is the proposition signified to the Pennsylvania Indians seated on the Susquehanna River by the two belts they sent. All our Indians are settled to the eastward of the Susquehanna."

June 29, 1721:

"Rains have been very violent up the country, especially west of the Schuylkill. The waters raised and drowned many cattle. Robert Haydn's mill was entirely carried away. A large stone bridge at Pennypacker's

Mill was wholly destroyed. It is the greatest freshet known in twenty years."

July 6, 1721:

"His Excellency, Sir William Keith, our Governor, with some of his council and thirty other gentlemen, set out Monday last for Conestoga in order to meet our Indians and some of five nations, to settle a peace with them as usually."

July 13, 1721:

"On Tuesday night last his Excellency, Sir Wm. Keith, Baronet, our Governor, and the gentlemen who attended him, arrived here (Philadelphia) from Conestogoe. He went thither to meet the heads of the Five Nations, who waited his coming to renew the treaties of peace and friendship with them, and accommodate some irregularities committed by the young men of those nations of War Indians. The Governor and all the company were handsomely entertained and treated at the house of John Cartledge, Esq., during their stay at Conestogoe."

July 27, 1721:

"The particulars of an Indian Treaty at Conestoga between his Excellency, Sir Wm. Keith, Bart., Gov. of Pa., and the Deputies of the Five Nations. Printed and sold by Andrew Bradford."

Dr. Jordan says this has never been seen in print as a pamphlet. It is quoted in Hildebrun's issues of Pennsylvania Press, p. 58, but there is a Dublin reprint, dated 1723, in the Ridgeway Branch of the Library Company, of Philadelphia, which I have seen. It is, however, simply a literal copy of the Colonial Records.

This Irish reprint of 1723 (which is Vol. No. 797, in the Ridgeway Branch,

etc.) sets forth on the title page that Andrew Bradford printed the original and published it at the request of the gentlemen who were present at the treaty, and who went on the journey. It sets forth that it was reprinted by Eliz Sadler for Samuel Fuller at the Globe and Scales, in Meath street, Dublin, 1723.

While the context of the book is literally the same context set out in the Colonial Records, the following glowing introduction appears in the book which is not found in the Colonial Records:

"The Publisher to the Reader, Philadelphia, July 26, 1721.

"Courteous Reader: We here present you with an exact copy of the proceedings of the Governor in the late treaty with several nations of Indians at Conestoga, taken from the minutes of the respective councils which were held on the occasion. And we hope this will be more agreeably acceptable to our correspondents than any abstracts that could be published in our Weekly Mercury.

"The Indian village of Conestoga lies about seventy English miles distant, almost directly west of this city, and the land thereabout being exceedingly rich, it is now surrounded with divers fine plantations or farms, where they raise quantities of wheat, barley, flax and hemp, without help of any dung.

"The company who attended the Governor consisted of between 70 and 80 horsemen, most of them well-armed, and the directions that had been given were so well observed that great plenty of all sorts of provisions were everywhere provided both for man and horse.

"His Excellency, the Governor's care for the public safety of this

colony plainly discovers itself in his management of affairs with the Indians in general as well as by his late toilsome journey to and from Virginia and Conestoga. The good people of this city and province from a just sense of the happiness they enjoy under the present administration embrace all opportunities of expressing their love and esteem for the Governor, who at his return from Conestoga was waited upon at the upper ferry of Schuylkill River by the Mayor and Aldermen of the city with about two hundred horse. After a refreshment of wine and other cool liquors, upon the eleventh inst., about sunset, His Excellency arrived in good health at his own house to the universal joy of all the inhabitants."

October 12, 1721:

"Here has lately been published an essay towards an advantageous trade in raising hemp in this province, which has met with such general approval that a further account and direction about the management of it has been mightily desired by the countrymen and farmers; but feeling we cannot spare room for a very particular account, we shall, however, add something for further encouragement."

I add this because hemp-growing was a great industry in this Susquehanna country at this time.

January 7, 1722:

"Our General Assembly are now sitting, and we have great expectations from them at this juncture that they will find some effectual remedy to revive the dying credit of this province, and restore to us our former happy circumstances."

This item is important, because it shows that Pennsylvania was having her first money and business panic.

It was partly attributable to several stupid measures the Quakers advanced. Bradford's paper always leaned in favor of the proprietaries and against the popular house (while Franklin's Gazette took the popular side after it came into existence). Our Susquehanna country felt the panic very keenly. There was practically no money in sight.

January 16, 1722:

"Governor in his speech deploras the fact that there is no foreign market, and says he is about to establish manufactures here, so that the people shall have a home market; the Assembly reply that they are very glad the Governor will do this because the people 'are making melancholy complaint about a lack of market.' "

January 16, 1722:

"There is now published and sold by Andrew Bradford, at the Bible, in Second street, A Journal of the Votes and Proceedings of the honorable House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania, who are now sitting."

July 5, 1722:

Notice dated June 19th.—"Run away from the Iron Works near Susquehanna, in Maryland, one John Folks, a Welshman, and a joiner and cabinet-maker by trade. Whoever returns him will be well rewarded, etc.

"STEPHEN ONION."

January 1, 1723:

"Our Assembly is now sitting, and the people have great expectations that they will happily find some way to set on foot a current trade among ourselves.

"We hear that a Snow (a small

ship), said to be bound from Holland, is late arrived at the port of New York with Palatine Passengers on Board."

January 15, 1723:

"These are to give notice that the Palatines who were advertised to be at the head of Elk River, in Maryland, are now come up to Philadelphia, and will be disposed of for five years each, any one paying the passage money at ten pounds per head. If any of their friends, the Dutch, at Conestogoe, have a mind to have or clear any of them they may see them at this port." (Same notice in issue of January 22, 1723.)

June 6, 1723:

"Tuesday last being the anniversary of His Majesty's birthday, the same was observed in the following manner: At noon, upon drinking His Majesty's, the Prince and the Royal Family's health, a round of the guns of the garrison was fired, and was answered by the vessels in the Road, the soldiers (who, with the officers in new clothes, made a handsome appearance) fired three volleys, as did our militia, who were under arms, together with a new artillery company, being all in blue clothes, with gold laced hats; the company consisted of masters and mates of vessels. At night there was a bonfire and plenty of wine at the charge of the corporation. There were rockets and other fireworks fired from the walls of the garrison; the whole town was illuminated, and the whole was concluded with a fine ball and handsome entertainment by His Excellency, our Governor."

September 5, 1723:

"This day His Excellency, Sir Wm. Keith, Bart, our Governor, set out for Conestoga."

August 1, 1723:

"These are to give notice to all persons who have purchased lands of the Pennsylvania Land Company that have sent deeds over to England to be executed by the Trustees of said Company the which are duly returned by me their agent, who am to be spoke with every seventh day of the week at Henry Hodges, merchant in Philadelphia.

"JOHN ESTAUGH."

I insert this item because John Estaugh, for the London Company, took up a tract of 7,000 acres of land in the fork of the Conestoga and Mill Creek, on both sides of Mill Creek. The survey is among the Maps of the Pennsylvania Archives. I cannot find that it was patented to him, however.
August 6, 1724:

"On the 3d inst. about the hour of twelve (at New Garden, Chester county) there began a most terrible and surprising whirl wind which took the roof off a barn and carried it into the air and scattered it about two miles off, also a mill that had a large quantity of wheat in it, and has thrown it down and removed the mill stones and took a lath of the barn and carried it into the air which fell with such force that it stuck fast in a white oak stump so that it is very hard to get out. Also a plow it carried into the air and at the fall thereof pitched on the end of the beam and stuck into the ground quite up to the coulter, so they were forced to dig it out. It killed a parcel of geese; and three or four hawks which were found dead about the fields. At a branch of the Neshaminy Creek it blew three men a great distance, lifting them into the air."

I jot this down because New Garden

is near the southeastern portion of Lancaster county.

August 12, 1725:

"Account of a book published by Francis Rawle called 'Ways and Means,' being a discussion of the manner in which we can restore our dwindling trade. This step is very highly complimented by Gov. Keith in his address to the Assembly of August 10th, this year."

June 9, 1726:

Complimentary address signed by 238 merchants and citizens of Philadelphia to William Keith, who is about to give up the Government.

Gov. Keith's speech from the Bench to the People upon pronouncing the first decree in the first cause heard in the newly established Equity Court of Pennsylvania.

June 29, 1727:

"Strayed from Samuel Blunston, on the Susquehanna, near Conestoga, about the middle of May last, a red roan horse with a black mane and tail; he went away with a small bell on, in company with a roan mare of the same color, but smaller. The finder may return to the owner. Brand 'E.'"

July 6, 1727:

"A serious slander against John Jones, of Conestoga, who at one time was in the Chester prison, complained of and warned against."

August 24, 1727:

"Notice, on October 2, 1727, will be sold by public sale, two tracts of land at head of Apoquinomie Creek, in New Castle county, belonging to the estate of Sylvester Garland, 700 acres of good land, and grist and fulling mill. For information apply to James Anderson, minister, late of New York, now

at Donnigal, in the County of Chester, Pa., who has the power of disposing of the same."

September 14, 1727 (Palatines):

The ship Fame, from Holland, is now in the River (Delaware) with about 500 Palatines on board, who give an account of two more ships to sail from thence with more Palatines on board.

May 30, 1728:

"Yesterday the Hon. Patrick Gordon, Esq., our Governor, returned from Conestoga, having finished the treaty with the Indians in those parts, to the entire satisfaction of all that were present. This timely and prudent management of the Governor's has made everything quiet and easy, and the Indians were so well pleased that they said they never had such a satisfactory speech made to them since the great William Penn spoke to them himself. His Honor was met some miles from the city (Philadelphia) by Richard Hill and divers gentlemen and welcomed back with a handsome collation in the woods. At the city bounds his Honor was received in a very genteel manner by Thomas Lawrence, Esq., our Mayor, and a very great number of gentlemen, as well strangers as city inhabitants, who with several ladies with coaches accompanied his Honor to his house. It is reckoned the cavalcade consisted of near two hundred people, which is a far greater number than has ever been known to meet together on such an occasion, at any time heretofore in this province.

"We are told that the country people in and about Conestoga were so highly satisfied with the Governor in every part of his conduct, that, notwithstanding the scarcity occasioned

by the late hard winter, they brought in of their own good will, large quantities of provisions of all kinds and sorts, and would take no pay for them. About 250 men on horseback accompanied his honor to the Indian town, where the treaty was held, and great numbers flocked in from all parts to pay their compliments to him, so that it was said there was never seen amongst the inhabitants a greater harmony and a more cheerful readiness to assist with what was in their power, than appeared on this occasion, which was chiefly owing to the affable and courteous behavior of our Governor."*

June 6, 1728:

"At a Court of Quarter Session of Philadelphia, held June 3, a charge was delivered from the Bench to the Grand Jury of which the following is the conclusion:

"Gentlemen: You with all the other inhabitants must have observed the emotion and unreasonable panic which lately possessed great numbers of the people. It is true something has happened which raised the notice and concern not only of the Government, but of every good man; but it is really surprising to hear of the many idle, groundless and lying stories which have been bruited and thrown

*Rupp, page 199, discusses this treaty, quoting mainly the Colonial Records. But he also adds certain other information concerning it as the house of old 'Squire Andrew Cornish being at Conestoga and a stopping place. Attention is also called to the fact that the Indians, saying the great William Penn himself spoke to them, might be held to indicate one of the evidences that Penn visited the Indians there. They do not say, however, whether he spoke to them there or in Philadelphia. This first visit of Penn's to Susquehanna, in 1684 or 1685, is mooted, but there are a dozen persuasive pieces of evidence tending to prove such a journey.

out to alarm and disturb the people, some of which may have arisen from fear and ignorance; but we wish it were less obvious that much more have proceeded from a wicked design against safety of the country. We need not be more particular, but hope every true man will in his mind, mark such incendiaries.

“ ‘You will see published the Governor’s treaty with the Indians on Susquehanna. The chiefs with others of the Delaware are now here at the Governor’s request. You will find by the treaty that there never was a more amicable, open, and hearty freedom between us and them than at this time; which appears as well in their countenances and behavior towards us.

“ ‘This is noted to you that as you are dispersed in several parts of the country, you may as occasion offers in all conversations endeavor to quiet the minds of the people, and persuade them for the future not to hearken to, much lest assist in speaking, lies and ridiculous tales—and we heartily wish it may not hereafter be observed as the truth is, that the Indians are more calm and prudent than some of our people.

“ ‘They in their council have a decent and just way of thinking and although they cannot be but touched with grief, as is every honest man among us, at such as the late unhappy accidents, yet they wisely make all give way to the strict league and friendships which hath from our first settlement between the Christian and them, and impute crimes to madness, folly and wickedness of the actors.

“ ‘We entreat you, therefore, to excite all the people to use them well, and give no offence as the Governor by his

late proclamation has admonished and commanded; and let not that be done indiscreetly, either by tippling with them, foolishly talking or asking childish and impertinent questions, expressing a ridiculous bravery on one hand or foolish fear on the other; but let it be with all manliness, gravity and solemnity and sobriety as well as strict justice. This will honor our profession as Christians and draw their regard and love to us as Englishmen!'"

The justification for this long article lies in the fact that the storm center of the Indian disturbances was at Conestoga and resulted from two or three massacres there. The rumors swept like wild fire over the province and occasioned the Governor's visit to Conestoga, as well as this charge to the Grand Jury and many other similar admonitions.

June 6, 1728:

"Two chiefs who were not at the Conestoga Treaty came to Phil. and a treaty was made with them which pleased them very well and has made all quiet."

December 18, 1728:

"Philadelphia, December 11, 1728, Ran away on the first day of November from Andrew Cornish, of Conestoga, in Chester county, a servant woman named Mary Rawlinson, who has changed her name to Sarah Wood. She has on a brown coat and petticoat with one under petticoat of grey kersey joined at the top with blue. Whoever takes up the said servant woman and brings her to her master shall have forty shillings reward and all reasonable charges paid by

"ANDREW CORNISH."

Andrew Cornish was a Justice of the Peace, and lived a mile from Indianatown, says Rupp, p. 198 or 199.

Author: Eshleman, Henry Frank, 1869-1953.

Title: Early local references / by H. Frank Eshleman, Esq.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): American weekly mercury.
Newspapers--Pennsylvania.
Pennsylvania--History--Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775.
Lancaster County (Pa.)--Social life and customs--Colonial
period, ca. 1600-1775.

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society, 1907

Description: [281]-296 p. ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 11,
no. 8

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.11

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

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