

# Benjamin West Henry, A Lancaster Artist.

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The ancestors of Benjamin West Henry were Robert and Mary A. Henry, his wife, who emigrated from Scotland to Pennsylvania in 1722, and settled in Chester County. They were accompanied by their three sons, John, Robert and James. John, the eldest son, married in Chester county, Elizabeth Devinny, in 1728.

William Henry, their son, so well known to all Lancaster county historians, moved from Chester County and married Ann wood, of Darby.

The Store and Residence.—In the Recorder's Office Book XI, page 575, is a deed from Alexander Stedman to William Henry, on February 7, 1760, for a house fronting on Market Place, twenty-two feet two inches, and one hundred and twenty-five feet deep, to a fourteen-foot alley; on the east, by the house of Rudy Stoner; on the west, by another fourteen-foot alley.

This alley was called "Moravian Alley," and ran out to West King street, then High street. Market Place was the piece of ground now occupied by the City Hall, and the old Market House, which was not built until 1790, the consideration £350. Alexander Stedman lived in Philadelphia and was a partner of W. H. Steigel (known as Baron Steigel) under the name of Steigel & Stedman, at Elizabeth Furnace.

William Henry died intestate. On April 18th, 1809, in the settlement of

his estate by his son, William Henry, this property is described as follows:

"In the Market Square, bounded Westward by Moravian Alley, and East, by a lot of Jonas Metzger." Appraised at 758 pounds, 60 and 8 pence.

In the Life of William Henry, by Francis Jordan, Jr., page 27, we quote the following interesting sketch of the early friendship Mr. Henry entertained for the artist, Benjamin West:

"West was then about fifteen, a poor, unlettered tinsmith's apprentice, living in the nearby hamlet of Springfield, Pa., where he was wont to exhibit his undeveloped talent in decorating the fences and barndoors of the neighborhood with drawings, and by an occasional rude painting for a tavern signboard.

"As the first to recognize in these maiden efforts genius of a high order, Colonel Henry invited the boy to his house, assigned a room to his use, and supplied the materials essential to his work. On the walls of this apartment were many little studies, that were permitted to remain until the house was demolished. Here West made a number of excellent attempts at portraiture, of which two examples, Col. Henry and Mrs. Henry, are in the possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania."

Mr. Henry paid the compliment of naming his thirteenth and youngest child Benjamin West, the subject of this sketch, who was born June 8th, 1777, and married August 24th, 1794, by the Rev. Elisha Rigg, rector of St. James P. E. Church, Lancaster, to Miss Catharine Hoofnagle.

Probably Mr. Henry studied his art under Gilbert Stuart, and when West was honored by the appointment as the successor of Sir Joshua Reynolds as president of the Royal Academy,

he invited his namesake to visit him in London.

Not much is known of the life of Mr. Henry as an artist, as the only portrait painted by him that has been found or heard of is that of his eldest brother, William Henry, Esq., and is now in the Pennsylvania Historical Society in Philadelphia.

In the early records of the Masonic Lodge, No. 43, F. and A. M., of this city, upon the building of a new hall in the early part of the year 1798, Benjamin West Henry was authorized to paint a symbolical floor cloth for the furnishing of the Lodge, at an expense of £11, 5s 10p. This floor cloth was in use for many years in the lodge room.

Benjamin West Henry was made a Mason in Lodge No. 43 on November 8th, 1797; elected Junior Warden December, 1798; elected Senior Warden June, 1799, and served until June, 1802, when he was chosen Worshipful Master, which position he held for one year.

He died December 28th, 1806, in Lancaster, leaving three children. On April 24th, 1809, the Court appointed William Fitzpatrick, of Lancaster, and John Huffnagle, of Philadelphia, merchants, guardians over the person and estate of James, Anna Wood and Mary Henry, minor children of the deceased.

Judge John Joseph Henry was the brother of Mr. Henry. He served under Arnold in the campaign against Quebec, enduring all the hardships of war, at the early age of seventeen years, and later studied law and became President Judge of the Second Judicial District of Pennsylvania, an appointment of Governor Thomas Mifflin, succeeding William Atlee.

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