

## A PETITION FROM MARTIC TOWNSHIP.

To understand more fully the grievances which caused it to be signed and presented, it will be necessary to go back a year or two. In the spring of 1776 the Continental Congress advised each colony and province to take immediate measures to frame a new form of government, one more in accordance with the spirit of liberty and independence. The officers who then controlled the colonies generally sympathized with the Crown, and really had a majority of the citizens at their back. The patriots were in a minority ; but what they lacked in numbers they made up in zeal. Cumberland and the counties west of that were controlled by Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, who at this crisis of affairs completely controlled the politics in those counties ; and they also at this time obtained a majority of their friends in the Legislature, The Legislature issued a call for the election of deputies to meet in convention to consider the resolves of Congress. Those chosen from this county were :

William A. Atlee, of Lancaster, and the second Judge of the Supreme Court under the Constitution soon to be enacted.

Lodwick Lowman, who was an officer in the Revolutionary war, and member of the Legislature.

Col. Bertram Galbraith, of Donegal, who raised a battalion of militia in 1776, and was in the New Jersey campaign, and was the Lieutenant of the county from that date to 1779 ; also a member of the Legislature.

Col. Alexander Lowrey, of Donegal, who commanded the second battalion of

militia at the Battle of Brandywine, and a member of the Legislature for many years.

Major David Jenkins, of Caernarvon, who also commanded a battalion in the Jersey campaign of 1776.

William Brown, a member of the Legislature, and one of the signers of the petition.

John Smiley, a member of the Legislature.

Major James Cunningham, of Mt. Joy township, who commanded a battalion of the "Flying Camp" at King's Bridge and Long Island, and was with Colonel Lowery's battalion at Brandywine. He was a member of the Supreme Executive Council.

The Deputies met in convention at Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia, on June 18, 1776, and in a few days passed a resolution requesting the members of Congress from Pennsylvania to vote for an independent government. This was ten days before the Declaration of Independence was declared by Congress. But for the energy and patriotism of that man of iron, Colonel Thomas McKean, the members of Congress from Pennsylvania would not have voted for it. And but for the efforts of that brilliant lawyer and orator, James Wilson, most royally assisted by Judge McKean, the Constitution of the 'United States in 1787, would not have been adopted by the State of Pennsylvania. I heard an honored ancestor of mine, who admired and entertained these great men, state that her father, who was a member of the Legislature which met in the second-story of the State House, when the Convention was in session on the first floor, which enacted the new frame of Government, told her that James Wilson, Esq., was really the author of the greater part of the Constitution of

the United States, and was its ablest defender.

The New England people, and some from other States, sneer at Pennsylvania and the part her people took in the early struggle for independence. Our Commonwealth was probably the first to advise Congress to adopt measures for an independent Government, and was the second State to adopt the Constitution of 1787. Although the patriots in Pennsylvania were in the minority they ruled the politics of the State, and were in the front in every battle.

The Convention at Carpenter's Hall took immediate measures to call a convention to frame a Constitution, which met in Philadelphia on July 15, 1776. Benjamin Franklin was President and George Ross, Lancaster, was Vice President.

The members of the Convention were:  
Colonel George Ross.

Colonel Alexander Lowrey.

Colonel Bertram Galbraith.

Colonel Philip Marsteller (of Lebanon township).

Colonel Thomas Porter (of Little Britain township).

Captain Joseph Shearer (of Derry township.)

Colonel John Hubley.

Private Henry Slaymaker (who was one of the justices of the Common Pleas Court under the new Constitution).

One of the first acts of this Convention was to appoint delegates to Congress.

The Constitution was completed September 28, 1776. It was not submitted to a vote of the people, but went into immediate effect. These patriots were not taking any chances. They held the reins of government and kept them well in hand until the United States was free and independent.

Under this Constitution the Supreme Court was organized. Thomas McKean was made Chief Justice, William A. Atlee second Judge, and John Evans, of Chester county, third Judge. The Court first met in Lancaster, in the spring of 1777, and tried many Tories and confiscated their lands.

This Constitution had defects of form, which It is not necessary to enumerate in this connection ; but there was no uncertainty in its hostility to royalty and all that that word implied.

In the fall of 1777 the Assembly passed measures calling for an election of delegates to meet November 28, 1778, to frame a new Constitution for the State. The people throughout the State were indignant and sent many petitions like the annexed one, containing the names of nine-tenth of the voters in the State. This was too much for the Assembly and they rescinded the resolution, 47 yeas to 7 noes.

#### The Petition.

#### MARTICK TOWNSHIP.

To the Honorable the Representatives of the freemen of the State of Pennsylvania this Memorial Humbly Sheweth :

That your Memorialists are of Opinion that frequent Changes in Government have a tendency to weaken it, and to Create Divisions and Contests among the People and ought as much as possible to be avoided.

That, therefore, your taking up and passing a late Resolution for taking ye Sense of the people upon Certain Matters in the Constitution of this Commonwealth before the people have had sufficient Experience of it, has a tendency to produce the above Mentioned bad Effects, Especially as said Resolve appears to have been Grounded mainly upon Supposed *inconveniencys* in the present Constitution

and form of Government Suggested by  
Divers petitions to former Assemblies of  
this Commonwealth and adopted with-  
out any call of the Community—with-  
out any Representation from the Execu-  
tive Branch specifying the Incompetency  
of the present Constitution for the pur-  
poses of Good Government—without any  
Concurrence of that Honorable Body that  
we know of—or any Opposition or Em-  
barrassment in the way—Obstrucking the  
Execution of your Laws that we have  
heard of. We Cannot help, therefore,  
being of the Opinion—that in passing  
Resolve in Question—Espccially in the  
Mannor and Circumstances above Men-  
tioned—you have Exceeded the powers  
Delegated to you—and treated that Con-  
stitution of which you were the appointed  
Guardians with Great Neglect.

That, however, your Memorialists—if  
just and weighty reasons would be assigned—  
might not be against calling a convention.  
Yet we Cannot look upon the Manner in  
which you have appointed the votes to be  
taken to be fare and unexceptionable—the  
Question is perplexed by your Doubling it,  
and however they who are for a Convention  
may vote on Both Sides—we cannot see the  
propriety or Consistency of voting against  
one—and at the same time Electing the  
Members who are to Compose it.

And there are great Numbers of your  
Constituents who have taken a solemn  
oath to preserve the present Constitution —  
and who deserve well of this Common-  
wealth, who are apprehensive will not  
then be themselves justifiable in putting it  
into the hands of a Convention in any  
other way than by the Constitution Itself is  
directed—and who we are persuaded Can-  
not bring themselves to a Compliance  
with the Resolve in Question, in its pro-  
posed Mode of Execution.

For these Causes—and before you put Good people of this State to the Great trouble and Expense of a New Convention, Your Memorialists presume that you will take the first Opportunity of revising your Late resolve—and that your Wisdom and Goodness and Your Regard to the Peace and Tranquility of this State will Induce you Either to drop it Intirely or adopt it and Carry it into Execution in a Manner not Lyable to any Great and Just Exceptions.

John McMillan,	Peter Pulling,
John Dutton,	James Patterson,
T. C. Mitchell,	Robert Sloan,
James Patterson,	John Steen,
James Hays,	Hugh Caldwell,
James Johnson,	thigh Caldwell, Jr.,
William Brown,	Thomas Colby,
Robert Long,	Andrew McGinnis,
-- Long.	Thomas Reed,
Gregory Farmer,	William Pattisnn,
Alexandr Coy,	Michell Deally,
John Caldwell,	James Robinson,
Robert Pendry,	James Callahan,
John Robinson,	John Crage,
Geo. McLaughlin,	William Whit,
J. S. Black,	William Floods,
Samuel Kirkpatrick,	Robert Cunningham,
John Reagan,	Matthew Cunningham
John McMillan,	John Cunningham,
John Brannan,	Robert Snodgrass,
James Duncan,	Samuel Snodgrass,
John Pagan,	James Snodgrass,
Archibald Pagan,	Joseph Steel,
James Pagan, Sr.,	James Steel,
Andy Pagan,	Henry Alexander,
Andrew Pagan,	Robert Caldwell,
John Brown,	Fred. McPhaxon,
James Brown,	Samuel Elliott.
James Pagan. Jr.,	Thomas Wharry, Sr.,
Adam Moore,	David Lo wery,
Jamcs Moore,	Thomas Wharry, Jr.,
William Moore,	John McCalster,
Samuel Simpson,	John Barr,
David Gibson,	Samuel Dickson
Peter Simpson,	(Miller),
James Savage,	James Pegos,
Joseph McCullagh,	John Boyd,
William Kennedy,	Thomas Boyd,
James Moore,	John Bleare,
Samuel McCollough,	James Blair, David

McCollough, James Blair, Jr.,

Robert McCollough,  
Thomas White, John  
Rogers, William  
Gorman, Patrick  
Cambell, James  
Mitchell, John  
Snodgrass, William  
Snodgrass, Jas.  
Snodgrass, John  
Adamson, J o h n  
C l a r k , William  
Mc Adam, Robert  
Snodgrass, Joseph  
Nee11,  
Joseph A ird,

Samuel Wilson,  
Val cntain Gaitner,  
James Alexander,  
William Clark,  
John Hart,  
Samuel Wilson, Sr.,  
John McCreary,  
Hugh Bigham,  
John Reid,  
David McDermeet,  
John Reid,  
Daniel McDermeet,  
Daniel  
McDermeet,Jr.,

Thomas Clark.

The names on this petition were all English and probably of Scotch•Irish origin. Many of them were members of the Associate Presbyterian Church on "Muddy Run."

Many of them were in the Revolutionary War, and I notice some who were the ancestors of prominent families who

now reside in the west and south.

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