

# HISTORY OF CATTLE AND STOCK YARDS IN LANCASTER COUNTY PRIOR TO 1800

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While the subject of this article is somewhat restrictive, in that it apparently localizes a business which has grown to a colossal proportion in the development and growth of the Nation, at the same time a general history of American cattle is necessary in order fully to comprehend the cattle and stock yard business, insofar as Lancaster County is concerned. Without a complete knowledge of American cattle in general, their importation, multiplication, breeding, etc., I should be attempting to erect a super-structure without an adequate foundation.

When this subject was assigned to me several years ago I readily and quickly consented to prepare a paper covering a subject which to the casual observer seems simple to write upon. However, it was not long before I endeavored to obtain data regarding this matter that I was mystified at the meager sources of information. While we consider the live stock industry as one of the primary industries of the Nation, next to agriculture being probably the most necessary for its livelihood, I was startled and amazed when I confronted the difficulty in obtaining accurate historical data on this all-important subject. I thoroughly searched the public libraries at New York and Boston as well as the Congressional Library at Washington, at which latter place I obtained more general knowledge of the history of cattle in America than from any other public source. (Lewis F. Allen on "American Cattle" and Hon. J. B. Grinnell on "Cattle Industries of the United States".)

The greater part of the historical data obtained in this paper, as well as the subsequent papers which I hope to prepare, was obtained from individuals, as well as from local newspapers and Historical Society reports. For historical data concerning the cattle business locally I am much indebted to Hon. Charles I. Landis as well as Hon. Frank B. McClain. From the files of the Lancaster Journal, through the courtesy of Messrs. Steinman & Steinman, I have obtained very much valuable and local historical data on the subject before me.

When we consider that the stock yards of Lancaster, Pa., handle more live stock during certain periods of the year than any other similar yards East of Chicago, Illinois; and when we consider that the total transactions in live stock at the local yards approximate \$15,000,000 annually, it is only fitting and proper that the local Historical Society should make some investigation concerning the rise and development of this business. I ask the indulgence of the local society, especially on this first paper, when much of the contents of the same will concern the live stock business generally, for as previously stated a general knowledge of the origin of cattle in the United States, is a sine qua non to a proper knowledge of the business locally.

Neat cattle, as we know them in Lancaster County as well in the United States, are similar to the English sparrow that flies in the air, in that neat cattle are not native to American soil. The ancestry of all American cattle can be traced to the Eastern Hemisphere. Probably the Buffalo is the only animal of the bovine genus native to American soil.

From the days of ancient Egypt, from Biblical times, from the writings of the Greeks and Romans cattle form a most important part of man's earthly possessions: the sacred bull of Egypt known at the "Apis"; the Brahma bull of India; in the writings of Job with his "one thousand yoke of oxen"; and the celebrated "fair heifer" which we find in the work of Jeremiah. The Greek Homer sings of the noble bullocks and in Roman

mythology Juno is known as "ox-eyed" and Virgil tells us of the beautiful cattle of the Roman Campagna. The Moors of Spain raised great herds of cattle and numerous breeds existed throughout Western Europe, their prototypes later appearing on the American continent. In fact oxen were used for labor in husbandry as well as for food in all countries through all times.

The first authentic record shows that the importation of cattle to the American Continent was made by the Spaniards in Mexico in 1525, whence the same were driven by the early pioneers into Texas and California. In 1608 the French imported the Normandy and Brittany cattle into Quebec and lower Canada. Tradition has it that the cow came over in the Mayflower. Many cattle were imported from the West Indies into Virginia in 1610 and 1611, where they multiplied and were subsequently driven Northward into our own county.

In fact, (3 Lancaster Historical Society 32) I find that Henry Dering was the keeper of an old stone ferry house on the south side of the road on the west bank of the Conestoga, along the King's Highway. He was the custodian of this ferry from 1762 to 1790. During the Revolutionary War he contracted with Robert Morris of Philadelphia to furnish the Continental Army with cattle which were driven under his supervision and control into Lancaster County from the State of Virginia, said cattle being driven by way of Harris Ferry, Carlisle, and Frederick, Md.

In 1625 cattle were first imported into the State of New Jersey from Holland, while in 1624 the first boat load of cattle entered Massachusetts Bay. The Swedes brought cattle to Delaware, where Newport is now located, in 1627, whence they were driven by the pioneers, when what is now Pennsylvania was under the jurisdiction of the Duke of Yorke, north westerly through south eastern Pennsylvania and over what was known as the old Conestoga or Strasburg Road.

Captain John Mason imported cattle into New Hampshire from Denmark to supply the Danish immigrants who settled on the Piscataqua River. These Danish cattle were coarse, large beasts, and yellowish in color. The Dutch brought cattle with them into New Jersey in 1624, whence the same were driven westwardly into Pennsylvania and through Lancaster County on what was the old Conestoga Road and later over the King's Highway, when the same was widened from a bridle path and Indian trail in 1733.

In 1682 the English themselves imported cattle directly to Pennsylvania and numerous importations followed annually, cattle multiplying by natural increase and by importation thereafter. Back history tells us that the early cattle imported into Pennsylvania, together with their increase, were insufficient to supply the ever-increasing number of immigrants. The good ship Concord, the Mayflower of the Germans, arriving in Philadelphia on October 6, 1683, contained a score of cattle, as beasts of burden. In fact, the Pennsylvania German farmer was very partial in favor of his live stock, often being reproached for taking better care of his stock than of the members of his family.

The first definite record of a migration of colonists Westward driving their cattle before them was in 1636 when pioneers from the Bay State began to drive cattle Westwardly from Northboro, Massachusetts, one hundred and sixty in number. A very significant fact to be remembered in this connection is that in the 18th century the migration of cattle, so far as the County of Lancaster and Province of Pennsylvania is concerned, was from the East to the West. It is often erroneously supposed that neat cattle were native to our Western prairie states while, as a matter of fact, all the cattle on the Western prairies, now almost as numerous as the stars of the heavens and the sands of the seas, are merely the posterity of live stock imported generations ago.

From the legislation applicable to the Province of Pennsylvania we find an Act approved by the Provincial Assembly, sitting at Philadelphia, April 5 1755, (V Pennsylvania Statutes-at-large 184), "the more effectually to prevent the supplying the French with provisions or warlike stores from our back settlements."

"Section VI....no person or persons whatsoever shall directly or indirectly....drive any horses, cattle, sheep or swine, to the intent and purpose to transport or convey the same, or cause the same to be transport or convey the same, or cause the same to be transported or conveyed to the French Army or to any of the French settlements or encroachments upon the continent of North America. Nor shall any person, or pretense of going to the English camp or any other pretense whatsoever....drive any horses, cattle, sheep or swine over the Allegheny Mountains without a license from the Commander-in-chief of the King's forces first had and obtained".

This Colonial Legislation on the part of the provincial Assembly only serves to confirm what was previously related, to wit, that the migration of cattle in the 18th century in the Province of Pennsylvania was from East to West and not, as is popularly supposed from West to East. The main arteries of travel in those early days, so far as cattle driving in Lancaster County is concerned, were over the great Conestoga Road, the oldest road in Lancaster County, opened in 1714; over the celebrated King's Highway, opened by order of his Majesty the King in 1733; over the road from Lancaster to Wrights Ferry (now Columbia) opened in 1734; and over the road from Lancaster to Harris Ferry (now Harrisburg), opened in 1737.

From these divers and miscellaneous beginnings our "Native" cattle originated. As the colonist grew in numbers and prospered, their cattle became a leading branch of husbandry and aided much in their subsistence. The first boast of the Pennsylvania farmer in personal property was in terms of cattle. The colonists measured their wealth, not in bank rolls, stocks, bonds, mortgages or automobiles, but in their number of cattle.

Ordinarily the Pennsylvania farmer paid little attention to specializing breed or race of cattle but was content if they gave milk, performed labor and propagated their kind. While mainly of British origin cattle multiplied very rapidly and required little importation after fifty years. The original imported cattle were an aggregation of different breeds and became a mixed race. There was practically no selective breeding in the 18th century, although later choice specimens from the favored breeds were imported by the wealthy immigrants with which to improve those previously imported.

The Lancaster County farmer of the 18th century made an early effort for increase of cattle—it meant home, shoes, butter and beef and, in fact, cattle were better adapted to clearing the forests than were horses. Because of the difficulty of transportation and distribution at this early time cattle were localized and confined in their immediate neighborhood, although gradually pushing Westwardly, as previously stated, with adventurous parties.

From the Colonial Legislation of the 18th century, insofar as what is now the State of Pennsylvania was concerned, we find that cattle formed no little concern to the legislators. From the "lawes" published March 1, 1664, by the authority of His Majesty King Charles the Second, "at a general meeting at Memsted upon Longe Island, by virtue of a commission of his Royall Highness, James, Duke of Yorke", we find that cattle were not to be slaughtered without notice to the town register. This was evidence that cattle were then limited in number and that slaughtering was not a specialized business undertaking but apparently common to many households. "The Laws of ye said Province made and past" December 7, 1682, inter alia, provided that all cattle should be marked with the "Towne Marke", being more evidence that cattle were limited in number and apparently confined to house-

holders in general. All cattle, over six months old and not marked were deemed strays. By chapter 199 of the same laws approved by the First Provincial Assembly, December 7, 1682, we find it enacted that no person "within this province and counties annexed (meaning what is now Delaware) shall presume to take up anie marked cattle, but by the owner's order".

By Act of the Provincial Assembly of Pennsylvania, passed February 24, 1720, (3 Pennsylvania Statutes-at-large 240), pounds were erected and maintained for trespassing cattle, lost cattle and cattle taken damage feasant in the counties of Philadelphia, Chester, (including Lancaster), and Bucks.

By an Act of May 10, 1729, of the Provincial Assembly (4 Pennsylvania Statutes-at-large 116) pounds were erected in each township of the Province for trespassing of cattle. Under various acts of the Colonial Assembly trespassing cattle were impounded and held by authority of the provincial officials until all lien charges for food, pasture and damages were paid in full by the owners (4 Pennsylvania Statutes-at-large 261). By the act of the Provincial Assembly dated June 1, 1780", to procure an immediate supply of provisions for the Federal Army in its present exigency",—All cattle were subject to be seized for the use of the said army (10 Pennsylvania Statutes-at-large 214).

By the latter part of the 18th century the driving of cattle over the highways of the counties had apparently become somewhat common. By the Act of Assembly, approved April 9, 1792 (14 Pennsylvania Statutes-at-large 279), toll gatherers on the turnpike road from Philadelphia to the Borough of Lancaster were authorized to stop any person leading or driving cattle and impose the payment of toll at the rate of  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a dollar for every ten miles in length of road driven.

By the Act of Assembly of April 4, 1798, Sec. 3, toll gatherers on the Philadelphia and Lancaster turnpike roads were authorized to erect scales at or near toll gates and to prevent cattle passing said gates until the same were drawn into the scales and the rate of burden taken should be ascertained by weighing.

As previous stated the migration of cattle proceeded from the Eastern Coast to the interior. I have already related how cattle were driven Westwardly from the State of Massachusetts. This authentic record of New England history is no doubt corroborated by a bit of local history showing that it was not uncommon for New England cattle to reach Lancaster County. From the files of the Lancaster Journal, dated August 19, 1797, I find that William Cooper, Cooperstown, Pennsylvania, advertised at public vendue to the highest bidder at the Tavern House of Abraham Witmer, "on the Turnpike (Philadelphia) Road near Lancaster, about forty yoke of New England broke oxen." This is the first record instance of a public cattle mart in Lancaster County, the embryo of the modern stock yards and it must not be forgotten that at this early date Lancaster was the largest inland town.

From the Lancaster Journal of November 20, 1795, we find that stray steers wondered from the plantation of Andrew Groff, Martie Township. On March 9, 1796, a large ox weighing 2884 pounds, was raised by Captain Obadiah Meeker of Elizabethtown. In the year 1796, one, Christopher Heger (probably Hager) was the leading butcher in the borough of Lancaster. On August 12, 1796, stray cattle were upon the plantation of Geo. McLaughlin, Martie Township and on October 23, 1795, a brindled steer strayed to the plantation of John McCreary. On the same day a red steer came to the place of John Ferguson, Mt. Hope Furnace Rapho Township. The Lancaster Journal also evidences sheriff sales of "horses, cows, sheep and hogs, as well as sales of land with stock farms". In the year 1797 we find frequent notices of tavern sales and always included in such were advertisements of good meadow land and "land for pasture", as well as land with "stock farms". Mad dogs were in the vicinity in the Borough of Lancaster biting cattle according to the Lancaster Journal of February 17, 1797. On January 1,

1797, five stray cattle came to the plantation of John Kelly and Joseph Hammond, Mt. Joy Township. On July 1, 1797, a stray cow came to the plantation of Brice Clark, Donegal Township, while on August 5, 1797, two yearling steers came to the plantation of Samuel S. Galbraith of the same township.

On August 5, 1797, Geo. McLaughlin advertised for public sale his farm in Martic Township, containing, inter alia, 90 acres of cleared land for pasture, "on the great road leading from McCall's Ferry to Christiana, Newport, and the Lower Counties, (now State of Delaware). At the same time will be exposed to sale horses, milch cows, cattle, sheep and hogs".

On August 26, 1797, John Bailly advertised the finding of a stray steer in Donegal Township, near Maytown, while Robert Speer at the same time advertised that a stray cow came to his plantation in Hempfield Township.

On December 2, 1797, Michael App, Sheriff of Lancaster County, advertised a sale under an execution writ of horses, cows and young cattle, as the property of John Brooks, Little Brittain Township. Again on February 9, 1798, Christian Carpenter, Sheriff of Lancaster County advertised a sale of horses, "horned cattle", sheep and swine, taken in execution as the property of John Robb, owning a plantation in Drumore Township. The same sheriff on March 2, 1798, advertised a sheriff sale, inter alia, of horses, cows, "young horned cattle" sheep and swine, taken as the property of John Meyer, Manheim Township.

Advertisements appeared in the Lancaster Journal of stray cattle coming to the premises of John Jordan, of the Borough of Lancaster, October 7, 1797, and to the plantation of Jacob Strickler in June, 1796. Edward Hughes advertised straying of a steer from his home, "at the Sign of the Black Horse",  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Lancaster May 5, 1798. Harry Bennett, offers a reward of \$1.00 May 19, 1798, "for the return of a red steer with a piece of tail cut off".

On February 2, 1798, Abraham Erisman advertised a public vendue on his farm in Rapho Township, on the road from Manheim to Anderson's Ferry (now Marietta) of seven working horses and "nine fattening oxen"; while on March 20, 1798, the administrator of Jacob Stoff, King Street, Borough of Lancaster offered to sell at public sale horses, cattle, hogs, etc. On June 2, 1798, in the Lancaster Journal there appears an advertisement for the sale of a tract of land, adjoining the Borough of Lancaster, with a barn containing stabling for a number of cattle.

In the Lancaster Journal of February 9, 1798, we see advertised what is probably the first public live stock sale in the Borough of Lancaster at the tavern house of Christopher Brenner of "sixteen saddle horses and upwards of 20 horned cattle". This is another instance of the stock yard in embryo.

We also find numerous advertisements of individuals making boots and shoes, among whom is Egbert Taylor on "Queen Street, south of the Court House, opposite Michael Slough's tavern". There are also numerous advertisements of individuals trading as tanners and dealing in hides.

From the various advertisements in the early Lancaster papers of the 18th century regarding sheriff sales of cattle, public vendues of live stock, as well as rewards offered for strays, the usual description is that of "Horned Cattle". The fact that practically all neat cattle in Lancaster County at this early period were of the horned type apparently shows that the great majority were bred on local farms where there were no facilities for dehorning or, if any, the same were crude, cumbersome and awkward. In the early days dehorning was the exception and not the rule; today it is most exceptional to find a herd of horned cattle in Lancaster County. This is because 95% of the cattle in Lancaster County today are Western-bred, where the same are dehorned in infancy by means of a caustic preparation.

With this data I conclude my first paper on the history of cattle and stock yards in Lancaster County, prior to the 19th Century. From the his-

torical data obtained from the local records mentioned above we learn that cattle formed no small part of husbandry in practically each of the then-existing townships of Lancaster County at this early date. The numerous advertisements of stray cattle, the public sales of cattle, the individuals engaged as journeymen tanners as well as boot and shoe makers show conclusively that cattle were bred, reared and slaughtered in this locality.

There is no doubt that cattle were driven here in the very early days, as soon as the county roads were opened, if not before, by the rough and hardened pioneers from the Eastern Shore. They travelled at a rate, no greater than 10 miles per day, stopping at nightfall at those celebrated wayside inns and taverns which now have passed into history. All these taverns furnished much to quench the thirst of a hardened drover in addition to furnishing pasturage to the live stock and food for the dogs which necessarily accompanied all large herds of cattle. The distinction between the "stage tavern" and the "wagon tavern" has been made in an earlier paper for this society (2 Lancaster Historical Society 74), yet suffice it to say that the "wagon tavern" was the customery tavern for the hardened cattle drover, the "stage tavern" catering to the elite. Live stock drovers never did in the past, nor will they probably ever in the future, belong to that class of society which we term "the elite", although they have always been a good, sturdy stock and truly representative of the American pioneer.

It will be for my subsequent paper or papers to elaborate more in detail the trials and tribulations of the cattle drover, travelling never more than ten miles daily with his herd of 200 or more, and also accompanied by his faithful dogs. Some of the Bacclanalian festivities of the "wagon tavern" after nightfall can well rank with some of the best scenes of the wayside inn of Shakespeare. It will also be for my future paper or papers to describe how the migration of cattle reverted its course, so far as Lancaster County and Pennsylvania are concerned, at that stage in our colonial history when land became too valuable for cattle raising and when the chief occupation of the Lancaster County farmer, so far as cattle were concerned, was merely to feed and fatten cattle which were bred and subsequently driven from the great prairie states of the West. The stock yards, as we now know our live stock mart today, did not make its appearance in Lancaster County until the Civil War period; but a complete knowledge of the modern stock yards can only be gained by a thorough examination of the history of cattle in the Nation, State and County from the time of their original importation.

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