

NEW HOLLAND SCHOOL HOUSE

One short month ago Dr. Dubbs read before this Society the history of an early educational movement in this city, which not only reflects infinite credit on the intelligent, able and self-sacrificing men who organized it, but which, by a reflected light, sheds a halo of credit even upon us, who have succeeded them. The erection of Franklin College in this German community one hundred and eleven years ago was a reaching out after the higher education, which it was felt ought to supplement the schools of minor grade already established. There were such not only in this city, but almost in every village where the church raised its modest steeple the school house stood close by it. In most cases these were parochial schools, taught either by the preacher or precentor, and may be fairly called part of the church organizations themselves. But I propose to speak of an early school, a "common school," as it was designated at that time, not built under direct church auspices, although the builders were churchmen, but by people of the entire community, irrespective of churchly affiliations, and which I believe is unequalled by any similar enterprise in the State of Pennsylvania. Its origin antedates Franklin College by one year. The prime mover in the enterprise was the Rev. Frederick W. Melsheimer, who Dr. Dubbs has told us was one of the members of the Faculty of Franklin College, the Professor of Greek, Latin and German.

The school about which I shall speak to you was founded in the town of New Holland in 1786. Fortunately the minute book has been carefully preserved,

and I propose to let it tell the story of this early and successful attempt to establish a "German and English Common School," for that is the title its founders gave it. There is an abundance of material for half a dozen interesting articles in the minute book, but I shall use only so much of it as will serve to show what manner of men they were who inaugurated and carried forward the scheme, and also that they made a complete success of it, being to that extent more fortunate than their fellow-citizens here in Lancaster, who scored a partial success only.

But I return to the first page of the record book, on which I find the following:

"ANNO DOMINI 1786.

"The Revd. Mr. Melsheimer, Minister of the German Lutheran Congregation at New Holland, after previous Consultation first had with divers persons upon the Subject of Building a Common German & English School house, proceeded to open a Subscription paper in the German language about the Neighborhood of New Holland for the purpose aforesaid."

The contents of the subscription paper are in the following words, viz.:

Da wir uns mit der Hülfe Gottes entschlossen haben, ein zum allgemeinen gebrauch bestimmtes Schulhauß für die Deutsche Nation in Neu-holland zu erbauen: so werden alle freunde der Gottseeligkeit; und einer Christlichen erziehungsanstalt gebeten, diese gute Sache zu Unterstützen, und durch einen milden und Christl. Beytrag zu befördern.

Neuholland den 19ten Juny 1786.

A subscription paper was likewise drawn up by Fred. Seeger in English, and handed about the neighborhood, which is in the following words, viz.:

"Whereas, The Education of Youth is of great Importance, and it ought to be the first object of parental Care, As it tends to promote everything that is dear and valuable in this Life. Therefore, We, the Subscribers—Inhabitants in and about Newholland, being perfectly Sensible of that Truth, and of the utility and Conveniency that would arise to us and to our posterity, and to persons residing at a distance from a well-adapted School establishment at the place aforesaid.

"That in order to attain to those Beneficial ends, It is proposed by us, and by the German Lutheran Congregation at New Holland aforesaid, to erect and build a Common English & German School house upon the Glebe Lands at the place, free to and for the use of all religious denominations and persons that shall willingly Subscribe and pay any Sum of Money towards the Building of the same.

"And in order to secure and ascertain the right to each and every Subscriber, their heirs and Successors, to either or particular School, It is proposed, That the Names of the Subscribers shall be entered upon record; And that before any Foundation to the Building is laid proper Articles of Agreement and Covenants will be entered into and executed by and between the said Subscribers and the said Congregation, so as to assure each and every person having Subscribed and Contributed his or their right, Title & Interest thereto.

"And It is further proposed, that upon a Meeting (to be called for that purpose) a sufficient Number of persons from among the said Subscribers shall be elected to be the visitors or Trustees of the said Schools, and to prescribe rules for the good Government thereof.

"Wherefore We the undesignated persons, in order to forward so Laudable a purpose—do hereby agree and prom-

ise to pay upon demand of the person authorized to receive such Sum and Sums of Money as will appear annexed to our respective Names. July the 19th, 1786."

Following the above we have the names of the subscribers and contributors, as follows:

| | £. | s. | d. |
|--------------------------|----|----|----|
| Jonathan Rolland..... | 2 | 5 | .. |
| Peter Diller..... | 1 | 10 | .. |
| Thos. Henderson..... | .. | 17 | 6 |
| James McConnell..... | 1 | 10 | .. |
| Henry Merkley..... | 1 | 10 | .. |
| John Sheibley..... | .. | 15 | .. |
| Mathias Sherick..... | .. | 15 | .. |
| Fred. Seeger..... | 1 | 10 | .. |
| John Luther..... | 2 | 5 | .. |
| Geo. Hildebrand..... | .. | 7 | 6 |
| John Bender..... | .. | 10 | .. |
| Nich. Yont..... | .. | 10 | .. |
| Nath. Ellmaker..... | .. | 7 | 6 |
| Fred. Baker..... | .. | 7 | 6 |
| John Divenderver..... | .. | 10 | .. |
| Geo. Stoner..... | .. | 10 | .. |
| Leonard Diller..... | .. | 10 | .. |
| Robt. Wallace..... | .. | 15 | .. |
| Saml. Ranck..... | .. | 7 | 6 |
| Valentine Ronk..... | .. | 7 | 6 |
| Martin Road..... | .. | 5 | .. |
| Jacob Weidler..... | .. | 15 | .. |
| Chs. B. Sturgeon..... | 1 | 5 | .. |
| Mich. Kinser..... | 2 | 10 | .. |
| Gabriel Davis..... | 1 | 10 | .. |
| Henry Road..... | 1 | .. | .. |
| George Matter..... | .. | 15 | .. |
| James Old..... | 2 | 5 | .. |
| Eml. Carpenter..... | 1 | .. | .. |
| Wm. Smith..... | .. | 15 | .. |
| David Jenkins..... | 2 | 5 | .. |
| Joshua Evans..... | .. | 10 | .. |
| George Stehly..... | .. | 3 | 9 |
| John Greiss..... | .. | 10 | .. |
| Zacchs. Peersol..... | .. | 15 | .. |
| Bernhard Wolf..... | 1 | 10 | .. |
| John Houser..... | .. | 3 | 9 |
| Jacob Sheibley..... | .. | 15 | .. |
| Henry Lippert..... | .. | 5 | .. |
| Bastian Stoppelbein..... | .. | 3 | 9 |
| John Fingenbein..... | .. | 3 | 9 |

| | | | |
|---|----|----|----|
| Isaac Reiff..... | .. | 10 | .. |
| Peggy Martin..... | .. | 7 | 6 |
| Valentine Kinser..... | .. | 12 | 6 |
| Henry Kinser..... | .. | 15 | .. |
| John Tisick..... | .. | 3 | .. |
| Alex. Martin..... | .. | 5 | .. |
| Peter Summy..... | 1 | 10 | .. |
| Jacob Carpenter (col.).... | 1 | .. | .. |
| Peter Eaker, Jr..... | .. | 15 | .. |
| Christ. Snyder..... | .. | 10 | .. |
| John W. Kittera, Esq..... | 1 | 15 | .. |
| Geo. Pinock, Mercht., of Phila. | 3 | .. | .. |
| John Hetzell..... | .. | 7 | 6 |
| Everhard Gruber, Esq..... | .. | 7 | 6 |
| Peter Hole..... | .. | 3 | .. |
| Jacob Miller..... | .. | 7 | 6 |
| Philip Kessler..... | .. | 7 | 6 |
| John Smith..... | .. | 15 | .. |

Total Amount Subscribed
on the English Subscription paper..... 50 16 ..

In all, 59 names.

Following the above are the names
on the German subscription paper:

| | £ | s. | d. |
|----------------------------|----|----|----|
| Adam Diller, Mill Creek.. | 3 | .. | .. |
| Isaac Diller..... | 2 | .. | .. |
| Michael Graybill..... | .. | 1 | 10 |
| Michael Brauss..... | .. | 10 | .. |
| Melchoir Lauter Millick... | .. | 10 | .. |
| Geo. Seltreich, Sen..... | .. | 7 | 6 |
| Jacob Berkhouser..... | .. | 3 | 9 |
| George Seltreich, Jr..... | .. | 7 | 6 |
| Balsar Besshoar..... | .. | 15 | .. |
| John Brubaker..... | 1 | 10 | .. |
| George Menzer..... | 1 | 10 | .. |
| Wm. Deets..... | .. | 10 | .. |
| Henry Fetter, Sr..... | .. | 10 | .. |
| Isaac Gausbett..... | .. | 2 | 6 |
| Henry Reichwein..... | .. | 5 | .. |
| Martin Road..... | .. | 5 | .. |
| John Divenderver..... | 1 | .. | .. |
| Christian Bremer..... | 1 | 10 | .. |
| John Luther, Esq..... | 1 | 5 | .. |
| Jacob Diffenderver, Jr.... | .. | 10 | .. |
| Jacob Beck..... | 1 | 10 | .. |
| Wm. Berlitz..... | .. | 10 | .. |
| John Shaffer | .. | 15 | .. |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|----|----|----|
| George Trautman | .. | 5 | .. |
| John Scheibly | .. | 7 | 6 |
| Jacob Ringwalt | 1 | .. | .. |
| Christian Miller | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| Mathias Sherick | 1 | .. | .. |
| Fred. Seeger | .. | 7 | 6 |
| John Bitzer | .. | 10 | .. |
| David Divenderver | .. | 10 | .. |
| John Schultz | .. | 3 | 9 |
| John Hoover, Jr. | 1 | .. | .. |
| George Hildebrand | .. | 7 | 6 |
| John Hildebrand | .. | 3 | .. |
| Isaac Reiff | .. | 10 | .. |
| Martin Shaffer | .. | 15 | .. |
| Philip Sprecher | 1 | 10 | .. |
| John Engel | .. | 15 | .. |
| John Bitzer, Jr. | .. | 5 | .. |
| George Weick | .. | 7 | 6 |
| Peter Grim | 1 | .. | .. |
| Sophia Miller, widow..... | .. | 5 | .. |
| Catharine Lippert | .. | 1 | 6 |
| Sophia Hole, widow..... | .. | 5 | .. |
| Peter Miller | .. | 5 | .. |
| Jacob Stein | .. | 5 | .. |
| Christian Hole | .. | 5 | .. |
| John Lippert | .. | 2 | .. |
| Fred. Shaffer | .. | 7 | 6 |
| Andrew Deig | .. | 5 | .. |
| Jacob Glasser | 1 | 10 | .. |
| Adam Diller, fat..... | 1 | .. | .. |
| Christoph Grosh | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| Balsar Bitzer | .. | 10 | .. |
| John Diller | .. | 7 | 6 |
| George Leonard | .. | 15 | .. |
| George Illy | .. | 10 | .. |
| Peter Burkholder | .. | 6 | .. |
| Mich. Hildebrand | .. | 15 | .. |
| Eurich Snyder | .. | 10 | .. |
| Martin Nehr | .. | 2 | 6 |
| George Stehly | .. | 3 | 9 |
| John Smith | .. | 5 | .. |
| John Houser | .. | 3 | 9 |
| Sebastian Stoppelbein ... | .. | 3 | 9 |
| John Borrell | .. | 7 | 6 |
| Valentine Kinser | .. | 12 | 6 |
| Valentine Petry | .. | 6 | .. |
| And. Shreder | .. | 7 | 6 |
| John Rein | .. | 15 | .. |
| Wendle Kremer | .. | 5 | .. |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|----|----|---|
| Christian Fellenbaum..... | .. | 7 | 6 |
| From a friend..... | 1 | 17 | 6 |
| | — | — | — |

| | | | |
|---|----|----|---|
| Total subscribed on Ger- man paper | 47 | 19 | 9 |
| Number of subscribers, 74. | | | |

Later, however, came still others, whose names were not on the subscription papers. They were:

Henry Hambright 1 2 6

Robert Cockley allows to
pay for the use of the
school 15 ..

Frederick Seeger contribut-
ed a donation which he
received for Clerk Fee
from the townships on
his examining the poor
accounts 5 ..

A contribution from Lea-
cock township 1 5 ..

Conrad Meyer, of New Hol-
land, left by his will.... 1 10 ..

Jonas Withers 5 ..

David Waltson, Esq., sub-
scribed the cash he re-
ceived from the over-
seers of the poor for
drawing a petition to
court for the township.. .. 7 6

Elias Meyer, in lieu of 200
feet of oak boards, sub-
scribed by him, paid.... .. 7 6

John Luther and Fred.
Seeger gave the fee they
charged for services done
to Christn. Breneman
and John Engel, in set-
tling their executors' as-
counts 7 6

William Crawford 15 ..

John Miller, Esq., High
Sheriff of Lancaster
county 7 6

Then we have this interesting item:

"James Old, Esq., allowed
the Trustees a Ten-plated
large Stove for his Sub-
scription Money, being.. 2 10 ..

Michael Sauer made and allowed gratis two pairs of the front door hinges.

Peter Shaffer hauled 1 day Stones with his own Team, gratis; and Geo. Diffenderver and John Berlet assisted in loading of 'em.

George Weick made and delivered gratis for the School house one pair door hinges, besides his Subscription Money. N. B.—The hinges mentioned George Weick made and charged for, equal to his subscription."

After this we have another interesting statement, as follows:

"Names of persons who have Contributed by furnishing the Trustees with sundry building Materials; also, the Names of persons who have performed Labour by way of Contribution. Likewise the Names of persons who have Subscribed Money and have furnished Building Timber for it, to be allowed to them in the payment of their Subscription Money, viz:

"List of Logs, by whom delivered on the ground either to be allowed or gratis, viz:

Geo. Hildebrand—4 logs for his Subscription Money

Jacob Hoover—2 logs for his subscription Money, excluding 1 day halling Stones and also allowed

| | | |
|--|----|----|
| upwards of Twenty-six rafters | 15 | .. |
| James Thompson—2 logs and halled them in, and also halled rafters from Jacob Hoover's Land. | | |
| James Martin—2 logs and some rafters | | |
| John Divenderver—2 logs delivered | 10 | .. |
| Jacob Stone—2 logs for his Subscription Money is | 5 | .. |
| Geo. Stone—2 logs deliver- ed | 10 | .. |
| Christ. Meyer— 2 logs de- livered gratis. | | |
| Jacob Sensenig—1 log de- livered gratis. | | |
| Valentine Kinser—2 logs delivered gratis. | . | |
| Christ. and Jacob Hole— 8 logs delivered by Chris- tian | 5 | .. |
| Peter Grim—3 logs for his Subscription Money | 1 | .. |
| Michael Hildebrand—3 logs delivered | 15 | .. |
| Jacob Hoover, Martin's Son—2 logs delivered gratis. | | |
| Joseph Hoover—2 logs de- livered gratis. | | |
| N. B. George Hildebrand halled them in. | | |
| Isaac Reiff—2 logs halled. | | |
| Martin Hoover—6 logs halled by George Main- zer for pay. | | |
| Jacob Groff—2 logs halled gratis. | | |
| Jacob Summy—2 logs and were halled by Peter Miller. | | |
| Philip Sprecher—2 logs and halled them in.... | 15 | .. |
| Balsar Besshoar—2 logs and halled them in.... | 15 | .. |
| George Mainzer—1 log and halled it in..... | 7 | 6 |

| | | |
|---|----|----|
| Jacob Glasser—2 logs and halled them in | 15 | .. |
| Gabriel Davis—2 logs and halled some stones at dif- ferent times for his Subscription Money. | | |
| Total number of logs for school house delivered as above mentioned, some whereof of 35 feet and some of 40 feet long, were Squaired by some at their own expense and others at the expense of the School house, Amtg. to 60 logs." | | |
| "Christian Summers deliv- ered gratis 10 Bushels Lime at | 10 | .. |
| Adam Miller will deliver 600 feet Laths, according to the Size wanting. | | |
| "Jacob Weaver, Sen.,deliv- ered on the ground, grat- is 10 Bushells Lime. | | |
| "Jacob Weaver, Jr., Sawed a log of his own into Laths and delivered them gratis. | | |
| "Elias Meyer will deliver gratis 200 feet oak Boards or pay the value thereof in Money at his own Choice | 7 | 6 |
| "John Bitzer, Sen., Ludwig Wolfard and Fasnacht have promised to deliver one Thousand Shangles. | | |
| "Salomon Meyer, Book- Binder at Ephrata, al- lowed for the Benefit of this School in his Charge for this (record) Book, the Sum of | 2 | 6 |
| "Isaac Brubaker, Christian Brubaker, Jacob Koch, David Fellenbaum, Jacob Houser, John Ad- am Roads, who were not | | |

Subscribers, worked at Sundry Times in the Cellar of the School house, as did many other Subscribers, in particular persons residing in New Holland, and all persons who have worked in digging the Cellar were found diet by the Inhabitants of New Holland, and the Cellar was completed without little or no Charge.

"John Luther, Esq., allowed several oak boards for Benches; also, found pint (pine) boards for the Trustees' Bench gratis.

"Jacob Weaver, Jr., Miller, allowed gratis, upwards of one hundred feet oak Boards for Benches to the School house.

"Messrs. Steemer, Albright & Lawn, Printers of the Borough of Lancaster, were so kind and obliging as to print Gratis about Eighty hymns to be distributed among the people, and to be sung by the School youth in vocal musical order under the direction of Mr. Shaffner, on the 26th day of Decr., A. D. 1787, being the dedication day of the School house.

"Recd. of the Widow Wittwer, 1 large Log for a Garder (girder). Ditto of Zaccheus Peersol for another Garder."

The foregoing, for the time being, concluded the subscriptions and donations towards building the school house. But the men who were foremost

in the work relaxed none of their efforts to push matters ahead and to provide for the regulation of the school when the time for actual school work should come along. I accordingly find the following memorandum in the minutes:

"After some progress was made by the Rev. Mr. Melzheimer, Minister of the German Lutheran Congregation, in Collecting Subscriptions for Building a Common German and English School house at the place aforesaid, It was thought advisable that some certain and permanent Fundamental rules for the good Government of the same should be first introduced for the Consideration of the Subscribers. And, accordingly, a Sett of rules were drawn up in both the German and English Languages.

"Whereupon, on the fifth day of August, A. Domini, 1786, previous notice being given to the Subscribers, a number of them met and thereupon the Business was explained, and the said Sett of Articles and Fundamental rules were read and Considered. And after some Time spent in the Consideration thereof, they were agreed to, and finally ratified and Confirmed, as such."

Then follows what are called "The Fundamental rules of the School Institution of New Holland, Lancaster County."

These rules were sixteen in number and occupy more than six folio pages. They are entirely too long to be given here, but I will, nevertheless, present some of the salient features found in them.

After a preamble, in which the project for the erection of a school building and the meeting for the adoption of the rules and regulations are set forth, the latter were adopted. They are too long to be given here in full.

Rule first is, however, so wise and liberal that I give it in full:

"First: That as the said school house is to be built by Common Contribution and general Collection of all the subscribers, so it shall always be, and remain to Common and general use and Benefit, to and for all persons of whatsoever religious principles and denominations they may be, and they who have voluntarily subscribed towards so laudable an undertaking shall enjoy an Indisputable right to the said School, and the use and Benefit thereof in Common for themselves and their heirs forever hereafter."

The second article provides for the registration of the names of all the subscribers and the sums they gave, and for the names of those who rendered other assistance and services, "for the Information of all concerned and of posterity." That was a most wise provision, and enables me to present this sketch of their excellent work.

The third article recites that the school house shall be built on the "Glebe Lands," belonging to the German Lutheran congregation. In consideration for that service the only reservation made by the congregation was that "every German School Master shall at all Times, by virtue of his office, be obliged to attend the said Congregation upon every one of their Divine Services and shall then and there serve to them in the Capacity of a Precentor and organist, and that no other German Master shall be admitted and appointed, other than such a person as shall be adjudged Capable to perform the duties and functions of a precentor or person that is capable to lead the Choir upon Divine Services, and that can act as organist aforesaid."

The fourth article declares that as the school house shall be built at the common charge and for common uses, it shall always be kept in good repair in the same way.

Article fifth provides for the selection, by ballot, of Thirteen Trustees or overseers of the School "to represent the German and English Nations," and further provides "that the persons to be elected, as aforesaid, should be Men of Sound Judgment and understanding, and of a discreet and good moral Conduct in Life." The men who select School Directors to-day are not so scrupulous and particular in their duties as were these men of old.

Article sixth sets forth the duties of the Trustees, which are about what they would be to-day under like circumstances.

Article seventh gives to the subscribers and contributors the right to call the Trustees to account every six months, and this duty is especially enjoined on them.

Article eighth provides for the election of a new set of Trustees, by the subscribers, every three years. The old ones were eligible to re-election.

Article ninth declares that Trustees may not resign before the expiration of their full term of office without permission, and, should they do so, they should forfeit twenty shillings for the use of the school. Failure to attend the regular Trustee meetings was also punished with a five shillings fine. Sickness or failure to receive notice of the time of meeting were deemed allowable excuses.

Article tenth provides for a President and a Clerk, to be selected by the Trustees from among their number; and also defines the respective duties of these officials.

Article eleventh declares that before any school master is accepted he shall undergo an examination by the Minister or Ministers of any religious denomination, in the presence of the Trustees. When selected, the teacher was required to promise that he would do his utmost to teach the pupils com-

mitted to his charge, and observe good moral conduct, both in and out of the school room.

Article twelfth provides for action if the conditions of the previous articles are violated. The teacher shall be exhorted to do better, but, if he fails, then the Trustees shall discharge him, no matter how good a teacher he may be.

Article thirteenth prescribes the duties of the masters. They shall keep lists of the scholars; shall note those who behave particularly well and show to advantage over the rest, while those who do not deport themselves well or study with diligence shall also be put on record, and the latter be shown to the Trustees for their information.

Article fourteenth provides for public examinations every six months, which fact shall be published in all the neighboring congregations four weeks before the day on which they shall take place. The exercises shall be opened "by a suitable and to the occasion well-adapted oration, to be delivered at the request of the Trustees by some one neighboring minister, and after the said examination shall be made, a Collection shall be made, and part of the Money Collected on the occasion to be applied towards distributing it among such of the Scholars as have performed and behaved well, Suitable presents, such as Books or some such things for their encouragement."

Article fifteenth provides that persons who were not original subscribers, but who nevertheless desire to become partakers of the benefits that shall come from the school, may become entitled to all such benefits upon the payment of the sum of ten shillings. But the Trustees shall have the power either to increase or decrease the amount, according to the fi-

nancial standing of the applicant. But no one shall under any circumstances be admitted to these privileges gratis.

The sixteenth and last article provides that the foregoing articles shall be regarded "forever hereafter" as the fundamental rules of the school, by the Trustees, and so good did they evidently believe them to be that they declared they should "remain by them unalterable." The Trustees were required to sign them and that this solemn act should go on record. Accordingly, at a meeting of the subscribers and patrons, held on August 5, 1786, a ballot was had, and the result showed that thirteen Trustees had been selected. These, then, in accordance with the proviso in article sixteenth, made the following declaration:

"In witness whereof, and in Conformity with the above 16th article, We the undersigned persons being duly elected, by the Majority of the subscribers, the present Trustees, Have to these presents, and in behalf of ourselves and of our Brethren whom we represent, and by their Special direction hereunto put our hands & Seals, This 5th day of August, A. Domini, One Thousand Seven hundred and Eighty Six.

| | |
|---------|--------------------|
| [Seal.] | JONATHAN ROLLAND, |
| [Seal.] | FRED. SEEGER, |
| [Seal.] | JOHN LUTHER, |
| [Seal.] | CHRISTOPH GROSH, |
| [Seal.] | DAVID DIVENDERVER, |
| [Seal.] | JAMES McCONNALL, |
| [Seal.] | MICHAEL MARTIN, |
| [Seal.] | SAMUEL RAUCH, |
| [Seal.] | GEORGE HILDEBRAND. |
| [Seal.] | JOHN SHEIBLY. |

All the above was certified to on December 4, 1786, by John Luther, as President of the Board, and Frederick Seeger, as Clerk of the same.

On the 10th day of August a business meeting was held, at which the President and clerk were elected. The ques-

tion of erecting the building also came up, "when it was unanimously agreed that a Cellar be dug 15 by 20 feet upon the North side and that the House be Two Story high and Tough Tailed, forty by thirty-five feet." Considerable difficulty was experienced before an agreement could be had, and toward which point of the compass the building should front. After much debate and several ballots it was agreed "that the house should be fronted as it now stands," which, during my recollection, was toward the South.

Frequent meetings of the Trustees were now held. On August 22nd a committee was appointed to make a contract with Joseph Williams, a mason, "to wall the cellar upon the cheapest manner possible."

From this time forward the Trustees held frequent meetings, at which the construction of the school building was the main business considered. At a meeting held on September 19th an animated discussion arose over the question whether there should be two chimneys at each gable or only one. By a vote of five to three the single-chimney party won. Strange to say, they contracted with a Berks county man—one George Zeigler—to supply the 3,000 oak shingles needed for the roof. It was also agreed "that the windows of the School house be made and constructed five by four lights of seven by nine glass, and that they be made so that they raise upwards." At a meeting held on October 3rd a contract was entered into with John Houser "to square 14 logs or more, as occasion may require, agreeable to written direction, at the rate of Two Shillings and Six pence per log."

Under the date of October 23rd occurs this entry on the minutes: "On the day aforesaid, Jonathan Rolland, Fred. Seeger, John Luther, Hen. Merkley and John Sheibly, they being duly authorized for that purpose, Entered

into written Contract with Valentine Kinser, Carpenter, for doing the following work, viz—That the said Valentine Cut, hall and square two Garders (girders) of 41 & of 42 feet in Length, befitting the School house, now about to be build. That he join and fixes the Joices into the said Garders & upon the outside logs thereof according to usuall Custom of suchlike Method of Building, and that upon both the first & second Story of the house. That he must Cut & Square a Sufficiency of rafters & assist in putting them up (but they, the rafters, must be halled on the ground where he will square 'em). That the said Valentine must nail on the Lathes. That in every pair of rafters he will put a Collar Beam to be Cut by him, but halled at School expence. That he will roof the house (Shingles & nails to be found). That he will make a Sufficiency of Clap Boards to Shut up the both Gable ends of the house, but the Timber for Clap Boards must be found by him ready to be Split. The necessary posts for the Gable ends he must put up (but be found). That for all which work to be done & performed in a good and Workmanlike manner the said Committee in Behalf of themselves & the said Trustees have Bound themselves to pay to the said Valentine within reasonable Time after the work shall be done, the Sum of Thirty Silver dollars. And it is understood that the said Valentine finding his own hands and diet."

At this point I find this: "Nota Bene. Fred. Seeger finds himself under the Necessity to make this Apology, and hopes he will stand excused with the Candid perusers both as to accuracy and Stile & writing of the foregoing, as the whole was performed by him only on a few Leisure evening hours." I take pleasure in bearing testimony to the careful and generally excellent manner in which these minutes

were kept by Mr. Seeger. During the twenty-five years he had been in this country he had acquired a thorough mastery of the English language, both in its syntax and orthography, that does him much credit.

Under the date of April 19th, 1787, I find this entry: "This day the School house was finally raised without any further Charge, other than about five quarts of rum, as all those persons who were kind enough to attend & assist in raising of it were found diet by sundry Inhabitants in New Holland."

At a meeting of the Trustees held on April 21st, a letter from Jacob Shaffner was produced and read, requesting the appointment of Master of the German school as soon as the building was ready. As the "Conduct and ability of the said Master was personally known to all the Trustees, the said Jacob Shaffner was by the unanimous vote of the Trustees met, appointed master to the German school, Subject to the Fundamental rules thereof; And also subject to such further rules & by laws as shall be made and prescribed to him from Time to Time during his said appointment and good behavior."

In the minutes of November 15, 1787, I find the following: "Mr. James Old, besides his generosity in allowing to the Trustees for the use of the School house a large Ten-plated Stove, worth four pounds, for his subscription Money, being £2.5, was so kind as to Credit to the Trustees another Ten plate Stove worth four pounds, for one Twelve Months."

As the time was approaching when the school house would be finished and ready for occupation, the Trustees began making arrangements to have a suitable dedication of the same. Preliminary action looking to this end was taken at a meeting of the Trustees held on December 7th, 1787. I quote the record of the day in full:

"This day a quorum of the Trustees

Met, and appointed Wednesday the 26th of the same month, being the 2nd day after Christmas, for a suitable day President and Clerk, with Jonathan Rolland and James McConnall, were appointed to invite several Clergy Gentlemen. Whereupon the Rev. Mr. Robt. Smith, of Pequea; the Rev. Mr. Muhlenberg, the Rev. Mr. Houtz and the Rev. Mr. Elling were invited by letter to attend accordingly; As were also persons and Preachers of all other religious persuasions invited."

Before dedication day came along I find another interesting record in the minutes. Here it is: "Upon the request of the Trustees a Number of Joiners met together for the purpose of making a Number of Benches for the use of the School house. Accordingly the following persons, Joiners and others, met to make the said Benches, to wit: Valentine Ronk, two days; Isaac Eby, John Kling, Geo. Stehly, Jr., Morgan Evans, John Bare, Henry Strickers and one Hirshberger, severally for 1 day, and worked gratis. John Houser, Samuel Ronck, Christoph Grosh, Henry Merkley and Jacob Beck all attended gratis and assisted to Complete the said work, and their diet was found to them by sundry of the Trustees and others, the Inhabitants of this place."

We come now to the day so long looked forward to, the day that was to witness the completion of the previous eighteen months of hard, unremitting labor. That day's proceedings, as they are found in the minutes, recorded by the vigilant and indefatigable Clerk Seeger, deserve to go on permanent record as they stand. Here they are:

"December 26th 1787

"This day being appointed pursuant to a former resolve of the Trustees to Celebrate the dedication of our School

house—which was performed in the following order.—Between the hours of Nine & Ten O'clock, the Scholars, the Singers, the Ministers, the Trustees & the Elders, Church wardens of the German Lutheran & Calvinist (German Reformed) Churches, & the Members of those Churches, & a Number of persons, English & Germans of other religious Societies assembled at the Parsonage house in New Holland. And about half after Ten O'clock proceeded from thence in procession to the School house in the following order:

"The Scholars, The Singers, the Masters, The Ministers, viz.: The Rev. Mr. Melzheimer, professor of the College of Lancaster, and a Gentleman lately arrived from Germany, Magister Reiche, President & Clerk of the Trustees, the Trustees, Elders & Church Wardens of the said Churches, and the Members thereof, And other persons as above mentioned. After the procession moved from the said place which was done with great order, two and two, headed by the President and Clerk of the Trustees, and approached the School house, the doors were opened, and after they and the people that attended had taken their Seats, The Solemnity was introduced by vocal music by the Schools & Singers in German under the direction of Mr. Shaffner, the German Master. Magister Reiche then opened the Solemnity with an Excellent and to the occasion well adapted prayer and suitable oration; this was followed by vocal Music by the former.

"The Rev. Mr. Melzheimer then followed the former, and in a most elegant argumentative and eloquent discourse from the proverbs of Solomon, Chap. 3rd from the 13th to the 16th verses, Shewed, to the great and entire Satisfaction of all that heard him, the utility & necessity of supporting and maintaining this and all other Schools, and Clearly demonstrated both public

and private advantages resulting from them.

"After the Rev. Prof had finished his discourse he was followed again by vocal Music as before, When Christoph Grosh, one of the present Trustees, a person of both a Moral & religious Character, and an Impartial preacher of his Society, at the request of the professor & Trustees, Concluded the whole by a very rational and to all that heard him, Satisfactory discourse, well adapted to this occasion, and Confirmed of what had been delivered to the hearers by the professor as Coinciding with him fully, and so finished with prayers. This being again followed by vocal Music as before; After which the Fundamental Articles of the School were read in both English & German. This done, the last vocal Music followed; The whole was performed with such good order, decency & decorum as would have done honor to a more respectable place than this.*

"All that is to be lamented on this occasion is that the Collection which was raised under the door, although it is presumed upwards of Seven hundred people were present, and it is supposed between four and five hundred of 'em entered the house, proved Short of the most Sanguine expectations of the Trustees. And that tho' many able people were present, Yet the Sum towards discharging the debts Contracted, and raised on this Solemn occasion, amounted only to Six pounds fourteen Shillings and Ten pence, to be accounted for per Dr. Luther. It is yet necessary to mention that the Rev. Mr. Muhlenberg, the Rev. Mr. Hendle & the Rev. Mr. Robert Smith & the Rev. Mr. Elling have severally, by Letter Signifyed the Causes of their non-attendance on this occasion.

"1787.

"JNO. LUTHER,
"President.

"Attested

FRED. SEEGER

Clik."

Perhaps, now that we have seen this enterprise launched, and under way, this might be a suitable point to bring these remarks to a close, but as this school had more than half a century of successful existence after this time we may be allowed to follow it up briefly.

One, Philip Ronk, of Earl township, left by will, in 1784, five pounds in gold and silver to go towards some charitable and religious purpose. The Trustees of the School applied for it, and, by giving an indemnifying bond to apply it to school uses, obtained the money.

But a considerable debt rested on the School, which it was desirable to get rid of, so subscription papers were once more prepared and carried around; these papers were dated January 26, 1788. The sum of £36.4 resulted from this effort. After this follow

*Of course, worthy Mr. Seeger did not mean just what he said; he meant a more important or considerable place than New Holland.

pages of accounts, showing to whom the monies had been paid out. The Rev. Mr. Melzheimer, who seems to have been the foster-father, the good genius, or whatever else we may choose to call him, of this school enterprise, set out on his own account and collected £18. 13. 6. from subscribers who had not yet paid up.

The election of a Master to teach the German school has already been mentioned, but I find no record of a Master for the English School having been made prior to October 29, 1789, when a meeting of the Trustees was called to take up some charges against the then Master. The minutes read thus: "Complaints were made by Mr. Sheibly and Mr. Jonathan Rolland against Master Wm. McGeary, who was present, and had an opportunity of defence. Master Sybert, of Lancaster, was next proposed in the room of Master McGeary."

But as there was no quorum, no further action was taken. What the complaint against Mr. McGeary was we can only infer from the following resolution, passed at the same meeting: "That the Trustees for the future will support and maintain the Fundamental rules of the School, and such other rules as shall hereafter be made by them, and that no Master shall officiate at their School who shall neglect or refuse any such rules."

This "old Schoolmaster" evidently followed his own plans, regardless of the rules laid down for his guidance. Later a vote was taken in the Board, the above named Masters being candidates; the ballot stood 8 for Sybert and 2 for McGeary. On the following day Master Sybert was required to undergo an examination at the hands of the Rev. Henry Moller, of Albany, and Fred. Seeger. The trial proved satisfactory and Master Sybert "was accordingly suffered to open School."

A meeting of the Trustees was called on November 2, 1789, to consider what should be done about a law suit for £50, which one of the builders, Isaac Eby, had brought against the Building Committee, for money due and unpaid. It was found the Board was anxious to get rid of that and some other debts, amounting to sixty odd pounds, so these men each assumed an equal share of the indebtedness and gave their individual bonds for the same. Here is that roll of honor:

| | £. | s. | d. |
|-------------------------|----|----|----|
| Michael Kinser | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| Jonathan Rolland | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| John Sheibly | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| David Divenderver | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| George Hildebrand | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| Christoph Grosh | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| Samuel Ronck | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| James McConnall | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| John Luther | 6 | 5 | 4 |
| Fred. Seeger | 6 | 5 | 4 |

I will be allowed to introduce the following episode, as an example of the many annoyances the Trustees were subjected to during the early period of their work, and how they managed to get out of them:

On November 2, 1789, it was ordered the costs on the suit should be paid, and a committee of two was appointed "to wait upon the Law-officers at Lancaster, and desire them, in behalf of the public, to relinquish their several Fees in favor of the School House. And the same being so represented, Mr. Yeates, Attorney for Plaintiff, wrote the following line to the Prothonotary of said County:

"Please to end this action. It being a suit brought on account of a public school, I charge no fees.

"J. YEATES."

"Nov. 6, 1789."

"To John Hubley, Esq.

"Nor do I.

"J. HUBLEY, Prot."

"And James Ross, High Sheriff of said County, was pleased to relinquish his fees by word of mouth, to the said Dr. Luther and Mr. McConnall. John W. Kittera, Esq., our Attorney, defended this action pro bono and patrie et salus populii, and thus ended this action without any Charges. Wherefore the Trustees do hereby give their thanks to these generous Gentlemen."

Things continued to run along about as usual. Repairs were needed and made from time to time. There was generally a shortage in the treasury, and in December, 1798, I find another subscription paper was passed around. At the same meeting it was resolved "That a standing Committee be appointed to visit on every Monday in the Morning the Schools, and see how and in what manner the Schools are carried on, and what orders are observed by the Masters and Scholars."

At this point there is an interregnum in the minutes, none being recorded

between the date given above and March 8, 1817. On April 1, 1817, I find that John McClellen was the teacher. In the following April Jonas Witmer applied for the position of Master, and, after due examination, was accepted as such.

On November 18, 1820, the Trustees agreed "that Alexander McPherson may move his School to the public School House, and to the room appropriated for English tuition, and there to officiate and Teach, upon the same terms, and for the same Compensation he has already engaged to perform with his present Subscribers and employers. And the said Master, Alexander McPherson, does hereby agree and engage to accept the said Charge and appointment, and agrees to Comply with the original rules of the School House and such other necessary rules as may be declared necessary for the Trustees to prescribe. That the hour of Teaching be in the Morning from 8 o'clock to half after eleven, And in the afternoon from half after one to five in the evening in the Summer season, and in winter at the usual hours. That the Master be requested to see that the Fire be made every morning in the Stove and on leaving it in the evening to see that it is well secured. And to prevent accidents by Fire, that he be also requested to see the pipes are properly cleaned from time to time, as may be found necessary."

The records are missing between March 4, 1823, and October 1, 1823. On the latter date the original subscribers and their descendants met and decided to reduce the number of Trustees from thirteen to nine, with five to constitute a quorum. The original fundamental rules were, however, left operative.

Between October 16, 1825, and February 13, 1836, there is an interregnum

in the minutes. Nor is this explained subsequently. At the latter date fresh life seems to have been infused into the school management. Some trouble seems to have arisen from allowing meetings and exhibitions of a secular character in the school house, by persons other than the Trustees, and it was decided that thereafter only the Trustees should give such permission.

On February 15, 1836, a meeting of the Board was held, when Henry Roland was elected President; Michael Diffenderffer, Treasurer, and Samuel Ringwalt, Secretary. At the same meeting it was resolved that the Lutherans, German Reformed, Presbyterian and Methodist congregations should be allowed to hold public worship in the school house, by the payment of fifty cents for every such meeting; the Trustees to furnish the wood, and the meetings not to remain in session longer than 9:30 in the evening.

A period of inactivity, lasting until 1844, again appears. The school, it is true, was kept up, but no regular meetings of the Trustees were held and no minutes recorded.

January 27, 1844, they met again and went over the accounts of the intervening period, which had been regularly kept during all that time. The treasurer paid over the balance in his hands and a new start was taken. Numerous business meetings were held during the ensuing six months. The Free School System having become a fact in the Commonwealth, it was resolved, on July 2, 1844, to confer with the School Directors of the township "in relation to the granting of the school house for common school purposes, to obtain of them, if possible, an appropriation, for the purpose of repairing the rooms, purchasing desks; also, in relation to the teacher or teachers who should receive this station." It was found that the Board of

Directors was willing to pay one dollar per month for each room occupied by them. The Trustees continued to hold meetings with considerable regularity during the next six years, but the minutes are taken up with their dealings with the renters who occupied that part of the house not allotted to school purpose, with matters of finance and repairs to the building.

Early in 1850 a proposition was received from the School Directors of Earl township to build a new school house for the use of the town and vicinity, to belong to the township for school purposes, and to be under the control and direction of the said Directors, and through them under the general free school system, provided the Trustees could and would sell or exchange the school house and land. On May 1, 1850, a meeting was called to consider the proposal. It was decided to let the matter rest for a time. In the following August a committee was appointed to consult with the Lutheran congregation on the subject. No definite proposition could be obtained from that organization at that time. Negotiations were again opened with the Township School Directors. A new committee was appointed to continue negotiations with the church people, but this, too, came to naught, the congregation claiming half the proceeds resulting from the sale of the property and half the cash on hand. But the matter lagged. No arrangement could be made with the church about the division of the proceeds that might be realized from the property. Various propositions were made by both sides, only to be rejected. Finally a proposition was received from the church people to the effect "that the proceeds of the sale of the School House and lot of land belonging thereto should be equally divided between the Trustees and the Lutheran church, and that the Church should also be en-

titled to one-fourth of the moneys in the Treasury of the Trustees (\$202,-70 $\frac{1}{4}$), first deducting from such moneys all costs and expenses incident to a sale and conveyance of the premises." The proposition was unanimously agreed to on the part of the Trustees, and in this way it was thought a conclusion was at last reached to a vexatious question.

The property was offered at public sale on January 15, 1853, and sold to John Steyer for \$935. But fresh complications arose. A bill in equity was filed by a number of citizens against the Trustees, by which they were enjoined from consummating the sale agreed upon. The cause was heard before Judge Henry G. Long, and the former injunction against the act of the Trustees was made perpetual.

In April, 1857, two petitions were sent to the State Assembly; one was presented in the Senate and the other in the House. These asked for the passage of an act enabling the Trustees and the Congregation to consummate the agreement which had already been entered into. The bill passed both Houses, and was approved by Governor Pollock on April 21, 1857. (See pamphlet laws for 1857, page 278.)

At a joint meeting of the School Trustees and the Trustees of the Lutheran Church, held on May 23, 1857, it was resolved that the school house property, real estate and furniture, as desks and benches, should be sold at public sale on June 20, 1857. At the said sale the property was sold to Daniel Richwine for \$1,060, and on July 1, 1857, a deed for the same was executed to him.

It deserves to be mentioned in the above transaction that all the School Trustees were also members of the Lutheran Church.

By the act of the Legislature already spoken of, the School Trustees

were directed to invest their share in the proceeds continuously, until the amount "shall in the whole amount to a principal sum not less than \$1,000; and thereafter the interest and incomes of such principal sum, or so much thereof as the Trustees at the time being, or a majority of them, may think proper, shall from time to time be applied to and towards the establishment and maintenance of one or more public schools in the said village, New Holland, to be open and in operation in such portions and periods of every year as the common schools may not be in operation in the said village, and under such rules and regulations as a majority of the Trustees at the time may order and direct."

Under this law, the share of the proceeds received by the Trustees was put on interest, and by 1876 had increased by the annual accumulations to \$2,100.

Since that time until now the Trustees have used the interest of this fund in opening a free school and employing two teachers for a period of two months every year, when the common free school season closes in the spring. To this school only children between the ages of six and twelve years are admitted. In this way the good work wrought by our German forefathers one hundred and twelve years ago is still making itself manifest among their grateful posterity. When we look back over this remarkable story, and think of its intelligent conception, the liberal-minded spirit in which it was carried forward amid a thousand trials and tribulations, our admiration and respect for these men of old knows no bounds. And yet these men have been reviled by grave historians, through ignorance, it is true, as people who were ignorant, bigoted boors, without refinement and indifferent to education and progress.

"By their fruits shall ye know them," and with this I leave their work to the judgment of future generations.

I have spoken thus warmly and appreciatively of this school, because

Do bin Ich ganga in die Schul,
Wo Ich noch war gans Kle;
Dort war der Meschter in seim Stuhl;
Dort war sei Wip, un' dort sei Ruhl —
Ich kan's noch alles seh!

I have thought a brief sketch of Frederick Seeger, Esq., who was one of the organizers of this school movement, and who for nearly thirty-seven years was the efficient and faithful Secretary of the Board of Trustees, would be appropriate in this connection. Fortunately, he left the materials for a brief biography behind him, in German, which is still in the possession of one of his descendants. He was born on January 16, 1750, in Diedelsheim, Palatinate. No expense was spared in his early education. He says: "I was sent to a Latin School, from my 6th to my 13th year, that with this and an acquaintance with other necessary branches of knowledge, I might the better get along in the world.

"After my father found me qualified to renew my baptismal covenant by a public confession of my faith, I was confirmed, in the 13th year of my age, and received for the first time the Lord's Supper. Soon after I expressed my wish to learn the mercantile profession, to which my father gave his consent. I then served a four years' apprenticeship, in the city of Stuttgart, with Mr. B. F. Behringer. After this I went to Heidelberg, where I was in the employ of John W. Godelman, for two years. From thence I went to Manitz, and entered the celebrated house of John G. Gontzinger.

"In order to learn more of the world and to improve my fortunes, I resolved to travel in Holland, with the hope of finding employment in some large

commercial house. My undertaking was unsuccessful, and this resulted in my coming to America, for, as I saw no prospect of getting employment in Holland, and did not wish to return to my native land, the way to America was prepared. I crossed the ocean in the ship *Minerva*, Captain Arnold, and landed in Philadelphia on September 20, 1771. I had to content myself with the circumstances in which I then was, and with the ways of the country, which, it is true, were not very agreeable. I was under the necessity of hiring myself to Benjamin Davids, an innkeeper, for three years and nine months. My situation was unpleasant, for my employment did not correspond with that to which I had been accustomed from my youth in my fatherland. In the course of nine months my hard service ended, for, with the aid of good friends, I found means, in a becoming way, to leave Davids for the employ of Messrs. Miles & Wister, where I remained three years and six months."

From the above autobiographical sketch I infer Mr. Seeger came across the ocean as a Redemptioner. He was a conspicuous example of the standing attained by many of these bondmen. He came to New Holland soon after the period with which he closes his sketch, and there he became one of the wealthiest, most respected and most influential men in the eastern end of the county. He died March 15, 1835, aged eighty-six years.

F.R.D.

Author: Diffenderffer, Frank Ried, 1833-1921.

Title: How the New Holland school house was built / by F. R. Diffenderffer.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): Schools--Pennsylvania--New Holland--History.
New Holland (Pa.)--History.

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society,
1897-98

Description: [181]-212 p. ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 2,
no. 7

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.2

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

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