

Mittelberger's Notes on Lancaster

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

IN the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., is an old and rare volume published in "Frankfurth und Leipzig," in 1756. It was printed in German, and is entitled, "Gottlieb Mittelberger's Reise nach Pennsylvanien im Jahr 1750; und Ruckreise nach Deutschland im Jahr 1754." [Gottlieb Mittelberger's Journey to Pennsylvania in the year 1750; and Return Journey to Germany in the year 1754.] Another edition was published in Stuttgart in the same year. The work was translated into English by Carl Theo. Eben and was published in Philadelphia in 1898. On the title page of the German edition, issued in 1756, it is stated that the book contains not only a description of the country according to the condition of the times, but also a detailed account of the sad and unfortunate circumstances of most of the Germans who had emigrated to America, or were about to do so.

In May, 1750, Gottlieb Mittelberger left Enzweihingen, Vaihingen county, for Heilbronn, where an organ was stored ready to be shipped to Pennsylvania. With this organ he sailed down the Neckar and Rhine to Rotterdam in Holland, and landed in Philadelphia, Pa., on October 10th, 1750. (See Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, Vol. XVII, page 324.) For nearly four years he resided in Providence, Pa., as schoolmaster, and as organist of St. Augustine's German Church.

Mittelberger described Pennsylvania as being "a healthy land. . . . It is quite populous, too, inhabited far and wide, and several new towns have been founded here and there, as Philadelphia, Germantown, Lancaster, Reading, Bethlehem and Frankford."

Among the German Evangelical Lutheran clergymen in Pennsylvania he mentions Mr. Gorack [John Siegfried Gerock] in Lancaster.

"In Pennsylvania there are already four printing offices, two of which are in Philadelphia, one in the English and the other in the German language; the third is in Germantown and the fourth in Lancaster."

"Nothing is lacking in this country," Mittelberger wrote, after he had returned to his native land, "except the cultivation of the [grape] vine, but I have no doubt that this, too, will come in time. It is no wonder, therefore, that this beautiful country, which is already extensively settled and inhabited by rich people, has excited the covetousness of France. And actually, while I write this, it is rumored that the French had made a raid into Pennsylvania in November, 1755, and had taken Lancaster, a surprise rendered easy by the dissensions between the Governor, Mr. Morris, and the Assembly, which latter had refused to vote money for the defence of the country."

Mittelberger states:

"I came to the country with the first organ, which now stands in a High German Lutheran church in the city of Philadelphia."

"At the present time, there are 6 organs in Pennsylvania—the first is in Philadelphia, the second in Germantown, the third in Providence, the fourth in New Hanover, the fifth in Tulpehocken, and the sixth in Lancaster, all of which came to the country during the four years of my sojourn there."

"Three great roads," this observing German traveler wrote, "have been laid out in the province of Pennsylvania, all of which lead from Philadelphia into the interior of the country as far as it is inhabited. The first road runs from Philadelphia to the right hand by the Delaware to New Frankfurt [Frankford]; the second or middle road runs through Germantown, Rittingston [Reading], and Dulppehocken [Tulpehocken], extending across the Blue Mountains; the third road runs to the left hand toward Lancaster and Bethlehem."

The following description of the Dunkard Monastery indicates that Mittelberger is mistaken in stating that the third road "runs to the left hand toward Lancaster and Bethlehem." Obviously, he meant Ephrata. At the latter place there was "a monastery and nunnery of Dunkers," described by Mittelberger as being "inhabited by brethren and sisters. The men do not shave their beards; many a one among them has a beard half an ell long. They wear cowls like the Capuchin monks, in winter of the same cloth and color, but in the summer of fine white linen. The sisters dress in the same manner. These people are not baptized, which is done by immersion in deep water, until they are full-grown and can give an account of their faith. Instead of Sunday they keep the preceding Saturday. Their convent-sisters aforesaid frequently bring forth living fruits in patience."

On October 10th, 1754, after many perils and hardships, his vessel entered the Thames at London and Mittelberger landed safely on the same day on which, four years before, he had trod the soil of North America.

An African Lion in Lancaster

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AS early as 1727 a lion was exhibited in Philadelphia. (Scharf and Westcott's History of Philadelphia, Vol. 2, p. 864.) So far as I am, at present, able to discover, it was seventy years later before a representative of this "king of beasts" was seen in Lancaster. We know that in 1797 an African lion was placed on exhibition here, although this may not have been the first of its species to be exhibited in this city.

The Lancaster Journal of Saturday, November 11th, 1797, contains an advertisement in which the attention of the public is attracted, according to the quaint custom of the times, by the salutation, "To the Curious." In this advertisement it is stated that an African lion is to be seen every day, Sundays excepted, "at the house of Jacob Stofft, in King street." This, undoubtedly, refers to the tavern conducted by Jacob Stofft. He owned the property at the north-east corner of North Prince and West King streets, and also the property adjoining it on the east. At the present time, D. H. Mosemann conducts a grocery store on the corner, and the Manhattan hotel is located on the property adjoining it. Stofft, doubtless, kept a tavern at one of these places,—either in the building on the corner or in the one adjoining it, and in one of these the lion was exhibited.

The advertisement in the Lancaster Journal is dated November 9th, 1797, and is follows:

"To the Curious. The African Lion, to be seen every day (Sundays excepted), at the house of Jacob Stofft, in King street. This noble animal is between three and four feet high, and measures eight feet from nostril to tail; is of a beautiful dun colour, nearly 8 years old & weighing 450 weight. He is tame as any domestic animal whatever, and is really worth the contemplation of the curious.

"Price of admittance, for Ladies and Gentlemen, One quarter of a Dollar—Children half price.

"The stay of this sovereign of Animals in this place, will be but short, the proprietor intending to remove."

The advertisement was accompanied by a crude drawing of a lion, probably printed from a wood cut.

Our researches lead us to believe that a camel was first seen in Lancaster in 1793, an elephant in 1798, and a lion in 1797.