

Wagon Loads of Gold in Lancaster

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

THE late William Uhler Hensel, a former vice-president of our Lancaster County Historical Society, and widely known as a leader of the Lancaster bar, would, when in a reminiscent mood, often sigh for "the days of yore, when taverns were known by the good old names and kept by people of the best social rank."

If many of us could have the fulfilment of our desires, perhaps we would restore the old days when Lancaster was the Eldorado of our great State of Pennsylvania, and gold and silver money was so plentiful that it was hauled through the streets of the borough in wagons. Now, doubtless, this statement about the gold and silver will startle the sober-minded members of this honourable Society who are assembled here this evening, and will recall to their thoughts the famous stories of Baron Munchausen (Mun-chau'-sen), nevertheless, the statement is true, if we are to believe the following news item, which appeared in the Lancaster Journal of Thursday, May 5th, 1813:

"Yesterday passed through Lancaster, seven or eight wagon loads of silver and gold, amounting to three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. This money is to go to the state of Ohio, to pay and provide for our Northwestern army. This makes about seven hundred thousand dollars, that have passed through Lancaster for the support of our unprofitable war. The money, to be sure, is all borrowed; but it must be repaid some time; and then our farmers and mechanics will be better able to count the cost."

Thomas Ashe in Lancaster

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

IN the Library of Congress is an old and interesting book on travel in the United States. The work, in three volumes, was printed in 1808, in London, for Richard Phillips, Bridge street, by John Abraham, Clement's lane. It describes a journey, in 1806, by Thomas Ashe, Esq., presumably an Englishman, "performed," as stated on the title page, "for the purpose of exploring the rivers Alleghany, Monongahela, Ohio and Mississippi, and ascertaining the produce and condition of their banks and vicinity."

In a letter, dated "Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, October, 1806," Mr. Ashe writes:

"The town of Pittsburg is distant rather more than 300 miles from Philadelphia: of which space, 150 miles are a continued succession of mountains, serving as a barrier against contending seas, and as a pregnant source of many waters, which take opposite directions, and after fertilizing endless tracts, and enriching various countries, are lost in the immensity of the Mexican Gulf and the Atlantic Ocean. Knowing the road to be mountainous and stony, I preferred travelling on horseback to going in a stage-coach that is seven or eight days on the road; and the fare in which, for the whole journey, is twenty-four dollars. The first sixty miles were a turnpike road; and my horse, which cost me only eighty dollars, arrived tolerably fresh at the end of them in twelve hours.

"The place at which I stopped was Lancaster, the county-town of [Lancaster county] Pennsylvania. The inhabitants are chiefly Dutch and Irish, or of Dutch and Irish extraction: they manufacture excellent rifle-guns and other hardware. The town is large, clean and well-built; but in spite of these attractions, I quitted it the next morning by sun-rise. Dr. Johnson was never more solicitous to leave Scotland, than I was to be out of the Atlantic States.