

# Notes On Lampeter, Lancaster County, Pa.

By JOHN K. WOERTH

AS TO the origin of the name Lampeter there can be no question that its name was suggested by the like name of the Welch College town, Lampeter, which lies on the border of Carmarthen and Cardiganshire in Wales. One or two patronymics are among those of the pioneers of Lampeter township and at least two Welshmen were among the original magistrate and justice of Lancaster county. Lampeter would at once suggest itself to Welchmen as a dignified name. To suppose that Lampeter was derived from Peter Yordy, an early settler, who was lame, is possible but not probable, for almost all of the original townships were given names of places from abroad and such names that would give dignity to them. Therefore Lampeter from Lame Peter may reasonably be dismissed. Peter Yordy must have been a very prominent man in the township in his day as there is standing today a two-story, stone dwelling house, on the road leading from Witmer's bridge to Lampeter, known at the Lampeter road, about a mile and a half north of Lampeter. The diamond stone on the east gable end has this inscription, "Built by Peter Yordy in the year 1740." When I was a boy I was often told that it was the second oldest home in the township. Among the industries of the village may be noted the manufacture of clocks by Anthony Wayne Baldwin, which was located near the square. Some of these, known by the name of Grandfather's Clocks, are still in use in the county. Mr. Baldwin died in 1887, at the age of 84 years. It was said of him that he was in eighteen fights and never started one. His son, John Baldwin, was the last man that kept the brick hotel.

The brick hotel is the oldest house in Lampeter. The brick for this house were brought over from England as ballast, and those are laid in the Flemish bond style. The mortar used was made in the fall of the year, then buried in the ground over winter and then used the following spring. The mortar at this time is so hard that a nail cannot be driven into it. This shows how well our fore-fathers built. This evidently was the first hotel; it stands on the southwest corner of the square and has been used as a dwelling since before the Civil War. This is supposed to be the haunted hotel that Ezer Lamborn describes in his Legend of Hell Street. On the second floor of this building can be seen the movable partitions which he so vividly portrays. By opening this partition the room could be enlarged for dancing purposes. These balls were evidently held at stated periods to entertain the drovers and teamsters who stopped there over night on their trips; for Lampeter was located on the "Long Lane." This "lane" is supposed to have started at tide water on the Delaware and continued to the Susquehanna river. It was first an Indian trail. It was called "The Great Conestoga Road", in the records.

The Eagle hotel stands on the northeast corner of the square. It was built in 1813 by Samuel Miller, a grandson of Jacob Miller, who came to this county with Hans Herr and his party of Swiss emigrants and settled near Lampeter in the fall of 1710. This hotel was a show place in the neighborhood at that time with its beautiful colonial architecture. Its interior was as beautiful as its exterior as evidenced by the staircase and other decorations which are fine to this day. The builder of this hotel died in 1826. It was afterwards kept by his son, Henry Miller, who was register of wills for Lancaster county from 1842 to 1845. He conducted it for more than fifty years. As there were other Henry Millers in the neighborhood he went by the name of Register Henry Miller. Devil Dave Miller was a brother of Henry Miller and was sheriff of Lancaster county prior to 1839. Lampeter was always noted as a political center. When Henry Clay was a candidate for the presidency it was a rally-ground for the Whig party. A club called

the Wide-Awake Club was formed in that campaign. The banner they carried was surmounted with a gilt cornucopia. This was placed afterwards in the Eagle hotel and could be seen for several years afterwards and was subsequently carried in the Garfield and Arthur Campaign. Thaddeus Stevens was a frequent visitor as a friend of Devil Dave Miller and the veteran hotel keeper, Henry Miller.

The east room of the Eagle hotel was used as a printing office for many years and among the books that were printed there; was "The Martyrs Minor", which was widely distributed throughout the county.

In the religious sphere we have John Herr, the great-grandson of Hans Herr. This same John Herr was the founder of the Reformed Mennonite church.

The little church south of the square is a monument to his memory. He died in Canada, May 3, 1850; his remains were brought here in 1855.

Lampeter, as an educational center, boasts today of having a vocational school, the standard of which is unsurpassed in the county. When the public school system was introduced it met with violent opposition from the farmers and others in the community, so that one Benjamin Herr was instrumental in procuring the services of Ezer Lamborn, who ranked high in intellectual ability and who no doubt had much to do in shaping the educational future of the village.

**Record of  
Lampeter, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania  
Post Office**

LAMPETER SQUARE, Pennsylvania, established June 1, 1819.

**Postmasters**

1. Benjamin Witmer—appointed June 1, 1819;
2. David Miller—appointed October 14, 1825;  
(Name of office changed to "Lampeter" between years 1825 and 1827; records incomplete)
3. Henry Miller, Jr.—appointed October 13, 1827;
4. Martin Miller—appointed January 25, 1833;
5. Henry Miller, Jr.—appointed July 22, 1836;
6. Daniel Musser—appointed December 1, 1842;
7. Martin Barr—appointed March 27, 1844;
8. John H. Harman—appointed May 16, 1845;
9. Samuel Weaver—appointed April 1, 1846;
10. Henry Kuhns—appointed October 19, 1846;
11. David H. Herr—Appointed April 12, 1847;
12. Henry Miller, Jr.—appointed June 22, 1849;
13. Christian Hess—appointed July 15, 1853;
14. Samuel Weaver—appointed April 1, 1854;
15. Henry Miller—appointed August 2, 1854;  
(Office discontinued January 22, 1855;  
reestablished January 30, 1855).
16. Henry Miller—appointed January 30, 1855;
17. Daniel M. Landis—appointed April 14, 1879;
18. Henry H. Dietrich—March 2, 1880;
19. Eli R. Witmer—appointed January 12, 1911, and still serving  
as postmaster.

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