

The Washington Association of Lancaster

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

Among the treasures preserved in the collections of the Lancaster County Historical Society is a little pamphlet of 16 pages, five inches long by three wide, entitled:

CONSTITUTION
AND
BY-LAWS
OF THE
WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION
OF
LANCASTER.

Printed for the Association.
WILLIAM HAMILTON, *Printer.*

1814.

On page three appears the "Preamble," which is as follows:

"In times like the present, [during War of 1812 with England] when we behold our beloved and once flourishing country disgraced and degraded; when we observe that our commerce, which a few years since extended itself over every sea, has been annihilated; when, after waging a war of conquest for almost three years, and after having drained the resources of the country for its support, we find ourselves invaded in every quarter, and the best blood of the country streaming in defence of our own soil, we are impelled by motives of patriotism to enquire into the cause of all these evils.

"In prosecuting this important enquiry, the finger of justice points towards the authors of the present inexpedient and unnecessary contest, which has already involved us in the greatest national distress, and which we fear may eventually terminate in the destruction of some of our dearest rights.

"At this alarming crisis of our public affairs, especially when we observe that every exertion is still making by our political opponents to support those very characters who have brought upon us all our calamities, it peculiarly becomes the disciples of Washington to use vigorous exertions for the purpose of stem-

ming the torrent of Democracy. To attain this valuable end, we can discover no better means than that of following the example of our friends in Philadelphia, and establishing a political society, to be styled 'The Washington Association of Lancaster.'

"It is not our intention to conduct the business of this Association in the dark, for we will be proud of declaring our principles and exhibiting our conduct to the world. It is not our intention to give personal offence to our political opponents, for there are many amongst them whose personal friendship we consider invaluable. But it is our intention, so far as we are able, to unite the energies of our party, and by every fair and honorable means to extend the influence of Federalism, and propagate the principles of the immortal Washington."

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.

This society shall be denominated "The Washington Association of Lancaster."

ARTICLE II.

Section 1. No person shall be admitted to membership, unless he be a Federal Republican, between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five.

Section 2. All applications for membership must be made to the Standing Committee, whose decision shall be final.

Section 3. Every member, on his first attendance at the meetings of the association, must sign this constitution.

ARTICLE III.

Section 1. The officers of the society shall be, a president, a first and second vice-president, a first and second secretary and a first and second treasurer; who shall be annually elected at the times and in the manner hereafter specified, and shall hold their offices for one year, unless removed by a vote of the society; Provided, that persons residing without the precincts of the borough be ineligible to the offices of second secretary and first and second treasurer.

Section 2. There shall be annually elected at the same time and in the manner of election of officers, thirteen of the members, who with the president, first and second vice-presidents, the secretaries and first treasurer for the time being, shall compose a committee, to be called the "Standing Committee:" Provided, that four of the thirteen, thus elected, shall reside without the limits of the borough.

Section 3. When any officer or member of the Standing Com-

mittee intends to resign, or declines being re-elected, he shall give notice of such intention at a preceding meeting.

ARTICLE IV.

Section 1. Any officer of the society, member of the Standing Committee, or member of the society, may be punished for violations of the constitution or laws, or for breaches of trust relative to any duties assigned him, by removal from office or expulsion, at the option of the society: Provided, that no person shall be so removed or expelled, without having had ample opportunity allowed him to make his defence.

Section 2. To bring any officer or member before the society in the character of an offender, for the purpose of obtaining a decision of the society, an accusation shall be drawn up in writing, stating distinctly the grounds of complaint, and signed by at least ten members: Provided, that no written accusation shall be necessary where the offence or contempt arises within the view of the society, but the member so offending may be instantly expelled, upon the concurrence of three-fourths of the members present.

ARTICLE V.

Every member who wishes to resign his seat in the society, must do so by a written notice, directed to the president, enclosing the badge of membership and a certificate from the treasurer, that he is not in arrear to the treasury.

ARTICLE VI.

Section 1. There shall be stated meetings of the association on the afternoons of the second Tuesdays in the months of September and November, and on the mornings of the 22d of February and 4th of July.

Section 2. The president shall, at the request of the Standing Committee, or at the request in writing of fifteen members of the association, call special meetings of the association.

ARTICLE VII.

Section 1. Every proposal for altering the constitution or by-laws, must come before the society in the form of a recommendation from the Standing Committee.

Section 2. No such proposal shall be decided on until it shall have laid over one meeting for consideration, when the approbation of two-thirds of the members present shall be necessary to its adoption.

BY-LAWS.

LAW I.

OF THE PRESIDENT.

The president shall preside and preserve order in the meetings of the society;— he shall have the appointment of all committees, unless where they are otherwise provided for, and shall not vote unless when the society is equally divided.

LAW II.

OF THE VICE-PRESIDENTS.

In the absence of the president from the borough, the first vice-president shall perform his duties and be subject to the same restrictions, as shall the second vice-president in the absence of both. In the absence of the president and both vice-presidents, a chairman pro tempore may be appointed.

LAW III.

OF THE SECRETARIES.

Section 1. The duty of the first secretary shall be to keep the minutes of the society, to read all essays and communications to the society, and to keep them in safe charge— he shall also read the minutes of the preceding meeting of the society and the minutes of the Standing Committee.

Section 2. The duty of the second secretary shall be to keep the minutes of the Standing Committee; to give six days public notice to the members of each meeting of the society; to notify new members of their election by the Standing Committee, and to act generally as its secretary. He shall also in the absence of the first secretary, or during a vacancy in that office, act as secretary of the association.

Section 3. In the absence of both secretaries, the president shall appoint some member of the society to perform the duties of secretary.

LAW IV.

OF THE TREASURERS.

Section 1. The duties of the first treasurer shall be to keep correct accounts of monies received and expended on behalf of the society, and to lay an abstract of them before the Standing Committee at its last meeting preceding each stated meeting of the society; and to dispose of the monies of the society according to its direction.

Section 2. The duty of the second treasurer shall be, to collect and pay over to the first treasurer the monies to be paid by

each member on his entrance, together with all fines for non-attendance at meetings or otherwise, and to keep correct accounts thereof.

LAW V.

OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE.

The powers and duties of the Standing Committee shall be as follows, to wit:

1. To receive essays, and, if they think proper, to have them read to the society.

2. To receive and decide on applications for membership. Every person proposed shall be ballotted for by them, and if there are not three votes against him, shall be admitted into the society.

3. To have the disposal of the monies of the society; no appropriation however, to take effect, without the sanction of the society.

4. To appoint three of its members, who, together with the second secretary for the time being, shall compose a committee, to be called the "Committee of Correspondence." And it shall be the duty of this committee to receive all communications which may be addressed to the society from similar associations, or otherwise, and to answer them; to frame circular addresses, and to maintain a correspondence in all cases where the interests of the society may require it: Provided, that all their acts be first submitted to the Standing Committee, and approved of by it.

5. To prepare and recommend any business which it may think expedient to be brought before the association, previous to each meeting.

6. Generally to watch over the interests of the society and of the cause it supports.

7. It shall twice in each year, i. e. previous to the stated meetings of the society, in the months of February and September, appoint a committee from its body, to examine the accounts of the treasurers.

8. It shall have power to frame laws and impose fines on its members, when acting as a Standing Committee: Provided such laws are not inconsistent with the spirit of this constitution and laws.

9. It shall keep correct journals of its proceedings, which must be submitted to the society at each stated meeting for its approbation.

LAW VI.

OF MEMBERS.

Section 1. Every person, on his first admission to membership, shall, on signing the constitution and paying to the treasurer

the sum of three dollars, receive from the second secretary the badge and certificate of membership.

Section 2. No member shall be admitted to the meetings of the society without the badge.

Section 3. If any person, after being duly elected by the Standing Committee, shall neglect to attend within three successive stated meetings of the society, unless prevented by sickness or absence from the county, his name shall be struck off the minutes, and he shall not be considered entitled to the privilege of membership, unless again elected.

Section 4. There shall be an annual contribution of two dollars paid by each member, to the second treasurer at the stated meeting in the month of November.

LAW VII.

It shall be the duty of the president to appoint a suitable person to deliver a public oration on the 22nd of February in each year. And he shall also have power to appoint any member (with the consent of such member) to deliver a public oration on the 4th of July; and also an oration before the association at each stated meeting.

LAW VIII.

The election of officers shall take place at the stated meeting on the second Tuesday of November, of which public notice shall be given in the papers, at least two weeks before such meeting. Provided that no person shall vote who has not signed the constitution and discharged all demands of the treasury, for which purpose the second treasurer shall attend during the election.

LAW IX.

A quorum of the society shall consist of twenty-five members.

LAW X.

The business of the society shall be transacted in the following order:

1. The minutes of the preceding meeting read.
2. The minutes of the Standing Committee read.
3. Essays and communications read.
4. Incidental business may be considered.
5. The oration (if any) may be delivered.
6. The roll shall be called.

Except at special meetings, when the business for which the society was convened shall be first considered.

LAW XI.

The following fines, which may be remitted at the discretion of the president, shall be exacted:

- | | | |
|----|---|--------|
| 1. | Members for non-attendance at special meetings..... | \$.25 |
| 2. | Officers, " " " " | .50 |
| 3. | Members for non-attendance at stated meetings..... | 1.00 |
| 4. | Officers, " " " " | 2.00 |
| 5. | Members may be fined for disorderly conduct, not exceeding two dollars, at the discretion of the president, an appeal, however, may be made to the society. | |
| 6. | For non-performance of duty at elections, &c. | 1.00 |

Miss Elizabeth C. Kinzer, of 240 East Orange street, Lancaster, owns a photographic copy of a certificate issued by this association. It is as follows:

October, 1814

This is
to certify
that

HENRY ROLAND

is a member of the

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION

OF

LANCASTER.

EDWARD COLEMAN
Secretary

WILLIAM JENKINS
President

The original certificate is in possession of the family of the late Frederick Roland, of Reading, Pa. Mr. Roland was a second cousin of Miss Elizabeth C. Kinzer. Henry Roland, whose name appears on the certificate, was her great grandfather.

The Lancaster Journal of Friday, February 10th, 1815, contains an announcement, as follows:

“Washington Association of Lancaster. A stated meeting will be held on the 22nd instant at the court house, precisely at 10 o'clock A. M. An oration will be delivered before the association at 12 o'clock.

“The society will dine at Col. Slough’s [White Swan tavern]. Tickets of admission may be had by application to Thomas Crawford, Strasburg, John Graeff, Jr., Marietta, or to one of the subscribers.”

Committee of Arrangement.

SAMUEL WHITE

JOHN REYNOLDS

GEORGE R. HOPKINS

JOHN BARBER

ANDREW BOGGS

JACOB ZELL

JASPER SLAYMAKER

The Lancaster Journal of Friday, February 24th, 1815, states that the birthday of the "Father of his Country" was celebrated by the ringing of bells and display of flags. "The different volunteer companies paraded and performed many evolutions and firings, in a truly soldier-like manner. They were accompanied by a band of music, composed of gentlemen amateurs. The ringing of bells, the repeated volleys of rifles, musketry and pistols, the variety of music and the shouts of the populace, were calculated to fill the mind with extraordinary emotions.

"An appropriate and excellent oration was delivered in the court house to the Washington Association, pursuant to their request, by Jasper Slaymaker, Esq., after which about 80 members of the Association sat down to an elegant dinner, at the house of Col. Slough [White Swan tavern]."

A special meeting of the Standing Committee was held in the court house on Monday evening, August 21st, 1815.

The Lancaster Journal of Friday, February 9th, 1816, contains the following:

"WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION.

"The next meeting of the Standing Committee will be held at the court house on Monday next, at 7 o'clock. A punctual attendance of the members is expected, as business preparatory to the celebration of the 22nd of February will be laid before the committee.

"JASPER SLAYMAKER,
"Secretary."

In accordance with the plans made at the above called gathering, a stated meeting of the Washington Association of Lancaster was held on the birthday of the "Father of his Country" in the court house at ten o'clock in the morning, at which time an oration was delivered by one of the members.

Subsequent issues of the local papers do not contain any references to this organization.

The Federalists, a political party formed in the early days of our government, claimed to be defenders of our Federal constitution. It had at one time such prominent members as Washington, Adams, Jay, Hamilton and John Marshall. The war with Great Britain (1812-14) was strongly opposed by this party. It fell under public suspicion and condemnation after the famous Hartford convention, held in December, 1814, and by 1820, the Federalists, as a national party, ceased to exist.

In all probability the meeting held in Lancaster in February, 1816, was the last gathering of the Washington Association, as the party in the support of which organization, was already on the verge of dissolution, and fast falling to disorganization.

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