

The Lancaster Reading Room

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

Among the rare books in the valuable library of the Hon. Charles I. Landis, presiding judge of the Second Judicial District, Lancaster county, Pa., is a pamphlet entitled:

“Articles
of
ASSOCIATION
OF THE
LANCASTER READING ROOM,
to which are added,
THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE ROOM,
AND OF THE LIBRARY; A LIST OF THE OFFICERS
AND SUBSCRIBERS, ETC.,
Together With
A CATALOGUE OF THE BOOKS, ETC.,
Belonging to the Institution.

Lancaster
Printed by HUGH MAXWELL

1827.”

This is one of the rarest issues of our local press. The book was owned, originally, by the late Julius Friedrich Sachse, librarian of the Masonic Temple, Philadelphia. After his death, it was purchased by Judge Landis. It is probably the only copy of this unique publication that has survived; and is of special interest to historians and antiquarians of Lancaster county, Pa.

The Lancaster Journal of Friday, April 13th, 1827, contains an announcement, as follows:

“A Reading Room, in which the American and foreign Reviews, and other periodical literary publications, together with the newspapers of our most important cities and towns, are taken, has recently been established in this city.

“A small Library of well selected books, is already annexed to the reading room, and there are strong hopes of its being increased by the remains of two public libraries, which many years

ago existed in this place, and which certainly cannot be disposed of to more advantage; besides there are prospects of liberal private donations of books."

In the "Articles of Association of the Lancaster Reading Room," published in 1827, appears an introduction as follows:

"To the Public.

"In nearly all the Boroughs and principal Towns in this State, there exists a public Institution, in which the Political, Literary and Scientific Journals of the day may be found; and frequently with them a respectable collection of standard Books, to which are sometimes added, public lectures on the different branches of knowledge.

"A number of gentlemen, viewing with regret the want of such an institution in this respectable city, in April last associated in an attempt to establish one. The progress already made they now submit to the citizens of Lancaster, leaving it for the reverend Clergy, literary and professional Gentlemen, Merchants and respectable Mechanics, to say how far it is worthy of patronage; and, if properly supported, whether it will not induce the Youths engaged in study, and the industrious Apprentices of our city, to seek in their hours of leisure solid and substantial amusement, by visiting the reading room; acquiring a knowledge of passing events from the Newspapers; gathering useful and important information from the literary and scientific Journals of the day, and returning home with some useful and entertaining book.

"The members of the Association would be deficient in their duty, and do injustice to their own feelings, were they to neglect this occasion of presenting their grateful thanks to the young gentlemen, lately composing the 'Belles Lettres Society', for the donation of their valuable collection of Books, comprising nearly two hundred and fifty volumes of choice works, by which they have been enabled, at this early period, to realize, in part, their first and anxious expectations of a Library.

"The articles of association, and the rules and regulations of the Room and Library have been drawn up and adapted to the infant state of the institution, and though considered sufficient for the regulation of the present association, yet the expectation is confidently indulged that a period will ere long arrive when the prosperity of this Institution will be such as to require their alteration to regulate an establishment not inferior to any of a similar kind in our sister cities.

"Books, Atlases, Maps, etc. will be gratefully received as donations, or on deposit, for the use of the Room, and a correct list of the donors and depositors will be kept and published annually."

In the copy of the book owned by Judge Landis appear the "Articles of Association of the Lancaster Reading Room," as follows:

ARTICLE I.

This association is for the purpose of procuring Newspapers of different States and Countries, and periodical works of literary and scientific character.

ARTICLE II.

The name of the association shall be, the "Lancaster Reading Room."

ARTICLE III.

No person shall hereafter be permitted to become a Subscriber to the Lancaster Reading Room unless he shall first pay to the Treasurer the sum of Ten dollars.

ARTICLE IV.

Each of the subscribers shall, annually, on the second Monday of April, pay the sum of ten dollars, in advance, to the Treasurer for the use of the association; and in case of refusal so to do for the space of two weeks after demand made, he shall not thereafter be permitted to use the books, papers and reviews of the reading room.

ARTICLE V.

The members of the association shall meet at the reading room on the second Monday of April, August, November and January, at seven o'clock, P. M., and adjournments of such meetings may be made when necessary.

ARTICLE VI.

The members of the association shall, at their meeting on the second Monday of April, and on the same day, annually, thereafter, choose a President, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and a Committee of Superintendence, to consist of seven Members.

ARTICLE VII.

The Treasurer shall receive the monies of the institution, and pay the same upon the order of the Committee of Superintendence. He shall twice in each year lay before the association a correct statement of receipts and expenditures, and of the funds remaining in his hands.

ARTICLE VIII.

It shall be the duty of the Secretary to attend the meetings of the association, and to keep fair minutes of all their proceed-

ings. He shall also attend at the room to take care it is sufficiently warmed, cleansed and lighted; and that the Books, Papers, and other property be kept in order and not abused; and, generally, he shall perform all reasonable and customary duties incident to the office of Secretary.

ARTICLE IX.

It shall be the duty of the Committee of Superintendence to purchase Newspapers and periodical works: to superintend the rooms: to enforce the regulations of the association for the Government thereof: to report to the association, for their order thereon, such breaches as the Committee shall think deserving of animadversion: and to propose from time to time such improvements in the regulations of the Institution as their experience may suggest. This committee shall also have the power to make purchases of Wood, Candles, Oil, and other articles, for the use of the room.

ARTICLE X.

The Reading Room shall be opened every day in the week, from eight o'clock A. M. till ten o'clock P. M., and no Member of the association shall be permitted to remove from the room any Review, Pamphlet, or Newspaper; provided, however, that Reviews, and Pamphlets may be taken from the room by the Subscribers for a reasonable time, three months after they shall have been received, under such rules and regulations as the committee of superintendence may adopt.

ARTICLE XI.

Clergymen of all denominations resident within the City of Lancaster, shall be admitted gratis to the use of the room, and Strangers shall be admitted to visit the room upon introduction of a Subscriber for a time not exceeding one month.

The rules and regulations of the Lancaster Reading Room were as follows:

RULE I.

All Books, Reviews, Magazines, Pamphlets, and Newspapers, shall be returned to the place from whence they were taken by the reader before he leaves the room, when he shall have no further use for them, under the penalty of twenty-five cents for each offence.

RULE II.

No conversation, smoking, or disturbance of any kind, shall be permitted in the room, under the penalty of twenty-five cents for each offence.

RULE III.

All citizens of Lancaster County, resident without the bounds

of the City, shall be considered as Strangers; and upon the introduction of a Member, receive admission into the room.

The rules and regulations of the library of the Lancaster Reading Room were as follows:

RULE I.

Each Subscriber shall be allowed to take out one set of books at a time, which may be kept one week. One Folio or Quarto, two Octavo or Duodecimo volumes, considered equal to a set.

RULE II.

Books detained longer than the time specified, are to be paid for at the following rates:—two cents per vol. per day for one month; when the price of the book, in addition to the fines, shall be paid. If the volume or volumes thus detained be a part of a work, or set, the whole set to be paid for. Books defaced or torn, to be paid for.

RULE III.

Books by no means transferable from one Subscriber to another, or loaned to non-Subscribers; under a penalty for each offence of fifty cents.

RULE IV.

Books will be delivered to, or received from, Subscribers on Wednesdays and Saturdays, from eight o'clock to nine A. M., from the first of April to the first of October, and from nine o'clock to ten A. M., the residue of the year; and at such other times as the Librarian may attend: but it is distinctly understood, that the above stated hours, are the only times that strict attention is expected from him.

RULE V.

Any Subscriber taking a book out of the room before informing the Librarian and giving him time to charge the same, shall for each offence pay a fine of One Dollar.

The officers of the Lancaster Reading Room were among the most influential citizens of the town. William Jenkins, Esq., was president, George Louis Mayer, treasurer, and Daniel Moore, secretary and librarian.

The committee of superintendence, of which Hon. Alexander Thomson was chairman, consisted of the following: John Reynolds, Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, William Norris, Evan R. Evans, John R. Montgomery, Gilbert Rodman, Jr., and Daniel Moore, secretary.

The subscribers were:

Buchanan, James
Brien, Edward H.
Bachman, Christian
Bachman, John (Junr.)
Bear, John
Cheves, Langdon
Champneys, Benjamin
Clark, Edward
Carpenter, Abraham
Carpenter, Isaac B.
Evans, Evan R.
Evans, James
Evans, Robert
Franklin, Walter
Getz, John
Hager, Christopher
Humes, Samuel (Junr.)
Hopkins, Washington
Jenkins, William
Jacobs, Cyrus S.
Kauffman, Andrew B.
Lane, John N.

Lightner, Nathaniel
Muhlenberg, Frederick A.
Mayer, George Louis
Moore, Daniel
McKelly, Mathew
Montgomery, John R.
Mayer, John B.
Maxwell, Hugh
Norris, William
Ogilby, Joseph
Parke, Samuel
Reigart, Emanuel C.
Ross, Patton
Rogers, Molton C.
Rogers, Henry
Rodman, Gilbert (Junr.)
Reynolds, John
Reigart, Wager P.
Reigart, John
Slaymaker, Jasper
Steinman, John F.
Sample, Nathaniel W.

Thompson, Alexander

The Handelian Society of Lancaster

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

THE Lancaster Journal of Friday, March 7th, 1823, contained an announcement that the Handelian Society of Lancaster would present to its friends and the public an oratorio, or concert, of sacred music, vocal and instrumental, in Saint James's Protestant Episcopal church, on Tuesday evening, March 11th, under the direction of Mr. Samuel Dyer, teacher of music, assisted by several gentlemen, amateurs from Lititz, who had kindly consented to render their services on this occasion.

Those desiring to attend the oratorio, and who felt inclined to patronize this first public effort of the society to promote improvement in the rendering of church music, were informed that subscription papers were left for signature at the Misses Jordans' circulating library; at the offices of Mr. Hugh Maxwell, Mrs. Mary Dickson, Mr. John Reynolds; and with the members of the society, who would also furnish pamphlets containing the words of the several pieces.