

ever. If there had been so much excitement in Lancaster, and if the Germans believed that the borough and county of Lancaster were to be presented to General Riedesel, surely Marshall, with his intimate knowledge of conditions, would have heard of it and noted the fact in his diary. To believe such a report would have been a reflection upon the intelligence of the good people of this community in Revolutionary times, as there seems to have been no reasonable foundation for the story. It was probably started by the convention troops during their stay in Lancaster, and told to Riedesel later, as a joke.

On New Year's eve, 1778, the German troops first stepped on the soil of Virginia, and on the 15th of January, 1779, arrived at their destination, near Charlottesville, where they were quartered as prisoners of war.

Riedesel and his family remained in Virginia until November, 1779, when he was permitted to remove to New York city, where, in the autumn of 1780, he was exchanged, and given command of the British forces on Long Island. He returned to Germany in 1783.

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## Petition for a School in Lancaster County in 1785

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

**A**MONG the treasures preserved in the library of the Lancaster County Historical Society is an old paper, yellow with age, measuring 8 by 13½ inches. It was presented to our Society, about thirty years ago, by the late William Henry Egle, librarian of the Pennsylvania State Library from 1887 to 1899. The paper is of heavy, durable quality, and bears a water mark, "J. Honig Zoonen." The document consists of eight pages, and the writing is clear and legible, despite the fact that it was written, with a quill pen, one hundred and forty-four years ago. The paper has been folded twice and is badly torn where it was creased. Evidently, it has been subjected to much handling. With but very few exceptions, the spelling and the grammatical construction of the petition are as good as one could reasonably expect even to-day; and where faults do occur, they are, doubtless, largely the results of carelessness. The tendency to undue capitalization is, of course, the most serious criticism to be made of what is otherwise a well-written paper.

When folded, the outer page bears the following inscription:

"The petition of divers Inhabitants of the lower part and Fourth district of Lancaster County, praying for leave to bring in a Bill to be enacted into a Law to Incorporate such a Number of

Men as would become Liberal subscribers for the purpose of erecting a public School in Earl Township, If Supported by the Hon'l. the Legislature by their Act.

“Read 1 time, Feby 22, 1785.

“Read 2 time, March 4, 1785, & referred to the Lancaster Members.”

The contents of this interesting petition are as follows:

TO THE HONORABLE THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FREEMEN  
OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY MET.

The petition of the Subscribers, Freemen and Inhabitants, of the Lower part of Lancaster County—Respectfully Sheweth,

That the establishment of public Schools and Seminaries of Learning has ever been considered by every well regulated Government a very great and Important object of public utility. That in a Commonwealth, like ours, every good Man, in our humble opinion, ought to be well acquainted with the principles of the Constitution and Government under which he lives, and enjoy those Blessings secured through the Smiles of heaven to us by the American Independency. That the Education of Youth (as we humbly apprehend) will be the most effectual means to Inculcate and preserve Inviolable our Inestimable privileges, as Freemen, purchased at so much Blood and Treasure, and secure to the Community, at all Times, useful Men. Deeply Impressed with those Sentiments, as well by a Love we bear to our Country and our posterity, as animated by that Liberal declaration of our Excellent Constitution, where in the Frame of Government it is declared “That a School or Schools shall be established in each County by the Legislature for the Convenient Instruction of Youth”, &., We, your petitioners, Freemen and Inhabitants of the Townships of Cocalico, Brecknock, Carnervan, Salsberry and Earl, in the County aforesaid, humbly beg leave to represent and Shew to your Hon'l. House, That there is no such School established in this extensive, populous, and wealthy County of Lancaster, as recommended by the Constitution, And that tho' there were one established, either in the Borough of Lancaster, or in the middle or upper part of the said County, it would afford but little Benefit to your petitioners residing in the Lower part, and Composing a district of the same. Should it be alledged from our Local Situation and distance from the Borough of Lancaster, where we acknowledge, that private schools are kept to the great advantage of its Inhabitants, That the Education of our Children may be obtained there, We have to observe, that the Borough would afford an opportunity for the most wealthy among us only, in as much as boarding and Lodging could not be obtained there but at a high rate. Whereas, on the other hand, it would tend greatly to promote Education in this end of the County, where a School erected under the Care of able Masters, and under the direction of Judicious Trustees Incorporated, at the most Central part of the aforementioned Townships, at or near a small Village within the Township of Earl, which place from its pleasant, high, and remarkable healthy Situation, is acknowledged on all hands to be the fittest place for the accommodation of Youth, and where all the necessaries of Life, Boarding and Lodging, may be had at a much cheaper rate than in populous Cities or Towns, and where few of the Neighboring Scholars would be above Ten Miles distant from their parents' abode. YOUR PETITIONERS further beg Leave to observe, That the aforesaid Townships are much Inhabited by Germans, who are desirous to have their Children Instructed in the English Language, as We of the English Nation also are to have our Children Instructed in the German Language, Because both Languages appear to us in

this Country essential to the Man of Business and for almost every profession and calling. But that we Labour under many Inconveniences for want of able Masters, because a few Neighbours who join in setting up a private School, and sometimes at great expense, yet cannot expect to employ a capable Master, neither, as it frequently happens, are employers capable enough to Judge of the Capacity of such Masters, many of whom that pretend to Teach School, are totally destitute of all Grammatical knowledge, from whence experience has Taught us of late to believe that Teachers, particularly in English, have Introduced dialects foreign to the purity of that Tongue, We might her intimate and point out many other reasons as motives for our present application. Suffice it to say, that we will only appeal to the personal Knowledge of every Member of your Hon'l. Body. That your petitioners had it at first in Contemplation to set on foot a Subscription to raise a sum of Money, and make no doubt we would have met with desired Success and encouragement from generous and Liberal Subscribers and a Suitable Lot of Ground to Build a School house and Tenement for a Master or Masters thereon, were it not for the many and great difficulties and embarrassments which all private undertakings on all occasions have to encounter; on the other hand, we are well assured of very great success in our design, if honored and supported with the patronage or Sanction of Legislative Authority.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray, that your Hon'l. House may be pleased, to grant to your petitioners Leave to bring in a Bill to be enacted into a Law, and to Incorporate such a Number of Men Inhabitants aforesaid and other Township Trustees of a public School to be erected at the place aforesaid, as shall be thought by your petitioners to be useful and become generous Subscribers for the Laudable purpose aforesaid.

That until measures can be devised and adopted effectually to support public Schools throughout the State, We most earnestly entreat, that our prayer (Which cannot be a public Burden) may receive the favorable reception of the Legislature.

That tho' we are fully Sensible, that the present exigencies are such, as will not for the present admit of any pecuniary support from the public, Yet with all due submission to the Hon'l. House, We would Suggest, That a small sum of Money could be granted for the support of Masters or for and towards the Building of a School House, and the same arising out of certain Fines within the County, such as of Tippling housekeepers and other transgressors of Law, &, And so much therefrom be appropriated for the use aforesaid as the Wisdom of the Hon'l. House shall think fit to direct and appoint.

And Your Petitioners, as in duty Bound, shall ever pray, &c.

The petition contains the following signatures:

John Kintzer	Jno. Amon	Michel Brubaher
Michl. Kinser	Max. Mcilvain	Peter Baker
Bejn. Lessler	Henry Hambright	Robert Good
James Watson	Joseph Cory	Alexander Martin
Philip Breitenstein	William Philips	Robert Wallace
Henry Quizer	Thos. Davis	Peter Diller
David Gern	Zaccheus Davis	Nicolaus Zund
John Amor	John Norton	Jacob Beck
Hugh Thomson	Heinrich Hatzel	Zaccheus Piersol
David Mentzer	Adam Weber	David Diffenderffer
C. Difenderver, Jun.	Christian Lessle	Jonathan Rollon
Jno. Smith	James Martin	Alexander Wilson
Conrad Stein	Thomas Kettera	Peter Grimm
Jno. Diller	George Lehner	John Jenkins, Jr.
Isaac Diller	George Stein	John Zell
Wm. Perlitz	Balzer Feltenreich	Jacob Fox

Jacob Uzlacken  
Isaac Cowan  
John Heitzell S. M.  
Philip Sprecher  
John Smith  
Ludwig Wolfard  
James Thompson  
Robert Smith  
Joseph Jenkins  
James Galt  
Thomas Osborwn  
Daniel Eicher

Michael Rein  
Fred Seeger  
John Luther  
James M. Connall  
Henry Markley  
Peter Ecker  
Joseph Williamson  
Henry Roth  
John Sheibley  
Earl Muller  
John David  
George Reins

John Huston  
Mathias Shirk  
Heinrich Hert  
David Cowan  
I. Bazelay S. W.  
John Rees  
John Jenkin  
Isaac Jenkins.  
(A portion of the manu-  
script is here missing  
Doubtless it contained a  
few additional names).

It is interesting to note that among the 81 signatures to the petition, there is not a single instance of a middle name or a middle initial.

On page 2 of the original manuscript is the expression, "That the Germans are desirous to have their children instructed in the English language, as *We* of the *English Nation* also are." The indications are that the petition was prepared by Americans, and yet evidently their freedom had been too recently acquired for them to realize that *they were Americans*. Then, too, very many of the names signed to the petition are German; and yet, by signing the paper they, too, claim to be "of the English Nation."

Reference is made, on page 3 of the original manuscript, to "tippling housekeepers," and a law regarding them. It would be interesting to know what this law was.

In the Minutes of the First Sessions of the Ninth General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, published in Philadelphia by Francis Bailey, the well-known Lancaster county printer, appears the following, under date of Tuesday, February 22nd, 1785:

"A petition from divers freemen, inhabitants, of the lower part of Lancaster county, was read, setting forth, that the inhabitants of the townships of Cocalico, Brecknock, Carnarvon, Salisbury and Earl, in the said county, labour under many difficulties for want of a proper school for the education of their children, and stating that the Constitution declares that the legislature ought to establish and promote seminaries of learning; therefore praying this House to aid them in the establishment of a school for the advancement of useful knowledge, and to grant them an incorporation."

The petition was ordered to lie on the table.

Three days later, "Petitions from a number of the inhabitants of Lancaster county, were read, praying, that conformably to the Constitution, a seminary for promoting learning may be established in the said county, and suggesting that the village of Strasburg, in the said county, would be the most convenient and advantageous place to establish such a seminary." These petitions were also ordered to lie on the table.

The matter was again brought before the Honorable House on March 4th, 1785, and was referred to the members from Lancaster county, with instructions to report on the subject. On Friday, March 25th, 1785, the committee made its report. Again the matter was ordered to lie on the table. Whether it was subsequently acted upon—favorably or otherwise,—is not known.

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## William Priest in Lancaster

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

**I**N the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., is an old and interesting volume entitled, "Travels in the United States of America, Commencing in the Year 1793 and Ending in 1797." It was written by William Priest, a musician, and was published in London in 1802.

Mr. Priest was one of the performers at a theatre in Philadelphia in the summer of 1794. On August 10th he wrote:

"Having a few weeks' vacation at the theatre, we agreed upon a scheme to give three concerts at Lancaster, a town in Pennsylvania, about seventy miles west of this city. Our band was small, but select; and our singers, Darley and Miss Broadhurst."

On August 31st, Mr. Priest wrote:

"Arrived at Lancaster, a prettily situate town of about nine hundred houses. It is reckoned the largest inland town south of New England; and, indeed, the only large town without some kind of navigation. To remedy this inconvenience as much as possible, a turnpike road (very superior to anything of the kind in America, and which will cost three thousand dollars per mile), is forming from Philadelphia, through Lancaster, to the Susquana [Susquehanna]. I told you this river, owing to the rocks and falls, was not navigable; but I forgot to inform you that the inhabitants of the back country continue to waft the produce of their plantations down the river on floats, during the floods in spring and fall; which will be conveyed by means of this new road to Philadelphia, whence it will be exported to the West Indian or European markets.

"The only manufactory in Lancaster is one of rifles; they have contracted to supply the Continental army with these 'mortal engines.'

"I have heard a hundred improbable stories relative to what has been done with the rifle by famous marksmen in America, such as shooting an apple from a child's head, etc.; to which I could not give credit: but, I have no reason to doubt the following feat, as it was actually performed before many hundred inhabi-