

Ann Moore, Postmistress of Lancaster, First Woman Appointed to Office Under the Federal Government

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

IN Vol. XXXIV, pp. 62-3, of the Proceedings of The Lancaster County Historical Society, appeared an article entitled "Postmasters and Postmistresses of Lancaster." In that paper it is stated that Ann Moore served as postmistress of Lancaster, Pa., from July 1st, 1798, to April 11th, 1829, a period of 31 years. Since that paper was published, my attention has been called to the obituary of Mrs. Moore which appeared in the Lancaster Examiner and Democratic Herald of Wednesday, February 16th, 1842. It is as follows:

"Died, at Baltimore, Md., on February 4th, Mrs. Ann Moore, formerly postmistress of Lancaster, Pa., in the 73rd year of her age.

"This venerable lady was well known to the citizens of Lancaster, among whom she had a large circle of acquaintances. Mrs. Moore had charge of the post office in this city for a number of years, and was the first female ever appointed to office under the Federal government, although the precedent established in her case has since been followed in several other instances. The facts which led to her appointment were these: The husband of Mrs. Moore had been postmaster at this place [Lancaster] for a considerable time before his death; but during the latter years of his life, being unable to attend to business, it of course devolved upon her. Mrs. Moore's management of the office gave such general satisfaction as well to the citizens as to the legislature, which then held its sessions at Lancaster, that, on the decease of her husband, she was proposed as a candidate for the vacant place. Although the application was a novel one, the government was at length induced, by the urgency and respectability of those who pressed the claims of Mrs. Moore, to grant her a commission. Her accounts with the general post office were always so regularly and accurately settled, that on several occasions she received the thanks of the department, conveyed in the most complimentary manner.

"For the last ten or twelve years, Mrs. Moore has resided with her son in Baltimore. The memory of this excellent woman will always be cherished by her friends with affectionate respect; and her character is deserving of notice as displaying the talent, energy and capacity that belong to the female mind; which, when neces-

sity requires, may assume the habits of business, without relinquishing those gentle virtues peculiar to her sex."

Mrs. Moore held office under six successive Presidents of the United States: John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson.

Meeting of Distillers

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A MEETING of distillers of Lancaster county was held at John Whiteside's tavern, in the borough of Lancaster, on Saturday, November 11th, 1815. Jacob Miller was appointed chairman, and John Rohrer secretary.¹ The distillers met for the purpose of preparing a petition to be circulated throughout the county; which petition, after a sufficient number of signatures was obtained, was to be sent to Congress, praying for the repeal of the law imposing an *additional* duty on distilled spirits. The meeting defined the situation clearly. If Congress should consider it proper to continue the duty on stills, the tax was to be figured upon the *capacity* of the still *only*; and if the then existing duty on the capacity was not sufficient, it might be increased; but it was felt that no tax should be levied on the *product* of the stills. It was also felt that distillers, after having entered into bonds and obtained licenses, should have the liberty of discontinuing by giving notice to the collector.

Henry Strickler, Jacob Miller and John Rohrer were appointed a committee to have a petition prepared expressing the sense of the meeting.

The following were appointed to obtain signatures:

Jacob Sherer, Melchoir B. Barr, George Withers, John Good, Samuel Miller, Jacob Johnston, Patterson Bell, George Jenkins, Jacob Gish, Henry Share, Nathaniel Ellmaker, George Lintzer, Martin Sheaffer, Henry Eberly, Henry Bear, Jacob Gamber, Isaac Lowe, John Forry, Isaac Heiney, Jacob Miller, Christian Rohrer, John Rohrer, John Stauffer, Michael Musselman, Christian Kauffman, Benjamin Herr, Abraham Peters, Jacob Mishey, James Crawford, Jacob Steman, Abraham Shenk, Martin Greider, John Houtz, Henry Strickler, William M. Slaymaker, John Neff, Daniel Buckley, Enoch Passmore, Martin Stauffer, Jacob Erb and John Leib.

It was hoped that distillers in the adjoining counties would send similar petitions to Congress.

Whether or not the law was repealed is not now known.

¹ Lancaster Journal, Monday, November 20th, 1815.