

# The Conestoga Wagon

By H. C. FREY

**I**N its beginning, the Conestoga Wagon originated, somewhere. No one seems to know exactly when or where; and few, if any of us, care very much about this unimportant detail. No evidence existing to the contrary, Lancaster County gets the credit for its origin. Had it originated in or near Boston, New England's literary geniuses would have written volumes about this old freight-carrying vehicle, and had it had its home in the South (Old Virginny) its praises would have been eulogized even beyond the imagination of a New Englander. Here in the Garden Spot of the world, where farming, farm exporting, and wagoning have been given the greatest amount of attention for generations, we are prone to sit idly by, or to be so busily engaged in agricultural and industrial pursuits that we have no time to display our civic pride on such an historical subject as the Conestoga Wagon.

We have here in this locality associated the name "Conestoga" with almost everything from a shinplaster to a National Bank, and something should be said about the origin of the word. Just exactly how this word originated is a question and would furnish an interesting problem for the Lancaster County student of etymology. One of the earliest references we have to a word similarly pronounced is the name "Onestega" given to the stream on a map<sup>1</sup> dated 1665. The name of the tribe of Indians, the stream, and the manor of Conestoga is another study, but we do know that all three of these were named long before either the Conestoga wagon or the Conestoga horse existed. We also believe that both the horse and the wagon were named from the section of Lancaster County from which they probably originated. Whether the wagon was named from the Conestoga breed of horse or the horse named from the wagon is another conjecture of little concern.

Much of so-called history is nothing but a narration of deeds of a few prominent men,—kings, generals and statesmen; of wars, battles and conquests, without deep inquiry into the character and conditions of the people and circumstances which can account for the success or failure of its leaders. As a result such history is necessarily one sided and imperfect, if not entirely false.

It is the purpose of this historical treatise to reiterate merely what has been said before about the Conestoga Wagon, with notes and additions, and to mention briefly a few things about the men who guided these vehicles through the valleys and over the mountains of our new country. These men were the product of cir-

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<sup>1</sup> August Herman's map.

cumstances and their lives should not be subject to the ridicule sometimes imposed upon them. It is true, they danced to the tune of the devil's instrument, "a fiddle," they played with the devil's tools, "a deck of cards," and they engaged in bar-room fights for the fun of it. They neither drew thousands of spectators at these events, nor did they receive a million dollars for a single fisticuff performance. They fought because they were that kind of men.

These hard-bitten men, travel-stained and bronzed by exposure, were toughened to the point of despising comforts. They feared nothing. But they were proud of their teams, their wagons and of the work they were destined to do. The transgressions of the automobile road hog of today are mere bagatelles compared with the deeds of these wielders of the blacksnake wagon whip.

They indulged excessively in "Old Rye" and "Monongahela," lived to a ripe old age and died long before Volstead tried to suppress this habit with his 18th commandment.

    Their wagons are rust,

    Their bodies dust:

    Their souls are with the saints—I trust.<sup>2</sup>

Such subjects as "The Conestoga Horse" and the "Conestoga Wagon Teamster" I must lay aside, however attractive they may be, and proceed with a discussion of the wagon.

### THE CONESTOGA WAGON

A few historical extracts of early dates given in chronological order lead up to the period when the Conestoga Wagon was, in its various types, the all important vehicle for local and long-distance hauling, not only in our County and State, but wherever the civilization of white man extended in this country. It goes without saying that the Conestoga Wagon of Lancaster County was the forerunner of the covered wagons of the South and the famous "Prairie Schooner" that figured so prominently in the emigration of American pioneers westward to the Pacific Coast.

To the average person of the present generation, the name means simply a covered wagon going westward. This erroneous conception should be corrected. The "prairie schooner" was a combined passenger and freight wagon, or rather an emigrant wagon, often containing not only a movable kitchen but also provisions and beds. It was either drawn by horses or oxen with the driver and occupants seated within the wagon. Often these wagons were followed by a primitive caravan of servants, cattle, sheep, swine and dogs. It was a well-made vehicle, served its purpose nobly, and with its long train of concomitants, made a picturesque scene.

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<sup>2</sup> An old Turnpike Road—Gossler.

The Conestoga Wagon served an entirely different purpose. It was purely a freight carrier, and the driver did not ride inside the wagon. He rode his saddle horse or sat or stood upon a foot board that slid out from the wagon bottom. One might note that a driver in a prairie schooner or other wagons and carriages, sat on the right side of the seat, while this Conestoga horseman took the left side, just as the drivers of automobiles do today.

Our country's enormous internal trade originally inaugurated and carried for nearly a century by the old Conestoga Wagon and for the past century further developed by our railways and canals, has (in the words of Chauncey Depew) made the United States, not only the richest of nations, but also the most self-sustaining and independent of them all.

*The Name*—Probably one of the earliest printed references to the Conestoga Wagon is that in the following advertisement which appeared in the Pennsylvania Gazette, Philadelphia, under date of February 5, 1750: "Just imported and to be sold very cheap for ready money by Thomas White at his house in Market Street, between 4th and 5th, almost opposite the sign of the Conestogoe Waggon, etc." Just one week later the same advertiser uses the term "Dutch Waggon" in a similar advertisement. In those very early days the expressions "Dutch Wagon" and "Conestoga Wagon" must have been synonymous terms.

In 1754 Governor Pownall visited Lancaster, and in his journal says the place then contained "five hundred houses and two thousand inhabitants; that it was a growing town and making money, having then a manufactory of saddles and pack-saddles."<sup>3</sup> This would indicate that at that time pack horses instead of wagons were used as the principal mode of long-distance freight carrying.

However in the following year, Benjamin Franklin<sup>4</sup> advertised in Lancaster for one hundred and fifty wagons, with four horses to each wagon, and fifteen hundred saddle or pack horses, and secured all of these to aid General Braddock in his expedition against Fort Duquesne. The wagons secured through Franklin's advertisement were sent to the English camps, filled with oats, corn and forage.

Word immediately came back to the effect that the horses and wagons from Lancaster County gave great satisfaction to Braddock and other officers. In Franklin's advertisement, he mentions the word "Wagon" no less than fifteen times and the word "carriage" several times, but nowhere does he use the word "Conestoga." The recognized Conestoga Wagon at this date must have been scarcely known or else Franklin inadvertently failed to mention it.

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<sup>3</sup> The Pennsylvania Railroad—Wm. B. Sipes.

<sup>4</sup> Franklin's Autobiography.

At the time of Braddock's expedition Lancaster was the scene of active military operations. Again in 1758 Lancaster assumed a military aspect by fitting out General Forbes' celebrated expedition against Fort Duquesne.

A remnant of the type of wagons reputed to be used in Braddock and Forbes' Expeditions conveyed Abraham Weber, family, and household goods in the year 1807 from Lancaster County, Pa., to Berlin,<sup>5</sup> Ontario, Canada, where this old wagon is still preserved in the museum of The Waterloo Historical Society.

In "An Account of the European Settlements in America," published in London in 1757, the writer, Edmund Burke,<sup>6</sup> in speaking of Philadelphia, says:

"Besides the quantity of all kinds of produce which is brought down the rivers of this province—the Delaware and Schuylkill—the Dutch employ between eight and nine thousand wagons, drawn each by four horses, in bringing the produce of their farms to this market."

This account mentions the Lancaster County farm type of wagon, but does not refer to it as a "Conestoga Wagon."

In a diary<sup>7</sup> kept by Captain Wiederholdt, a British officer, who was captured as a prisoner at the Battle of Trenton, he says that he and other Hessian prisoners were taken on December 31, 1776, to Philadelphia in wagons covered with ducking. These were undoubtedly Conestoga Wagons, but were not mentioned as such in this diary entry. Captain Wiederholdt later visited Lancaster in the service of his Majesty's Army.

Twenty-five years after the earliest reference we have to the term "Conestoga Wagon," under date of May 17, 1775, the following entry appears in Washington's diaries: "din'd at Mr. Saml. Griffins. After wch. attended a Commee at the Conistoga Wagon."<sup>8</sup> The Conestoga Wagon Inn mentioned by Washington was located on Market Street, Philadelphia, above Fourth Street, and was the same tavern mentioned in the Pennsylvania Gazette early in 1750.

Again in 1783 we have a record of "Major General Lee<sup>9</sup> dying in a small, dirty room in the Philadelphia tavern called the Canastoe Wagon, designed chiefly for the entertainment and accommodation of common countrymen," which shows that this hotel was undoubtedly used as a stopping place for long-distance teamsters.

The naming of a hostelry after the Conestoga Wagon as in-

<sup>5</sup> Now called Kitchener instead of Berlin.

<sup>6</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica.

<sup>7</sup> Diary of Captain Wiederholdt—Learned and Grosse.

<sup>8</sup> Washington's Diaries by John C. Fitzpatrick.

<sup>9</sup> An American Glossary—Thornton.

licated by these early references would justify making the statement that wagons known as Conestogas were traveling to and from Philadelphia in large enough numbers during the first half of the eighteenth century to give the vehicle the fame of tavern sign publicity. When we mention the first half of the eighteenth century, we go almost back to the time when the whole Province of Pennsylvania was "Penn's Woods," when part of Lancaster County was wilderness inhabited by Indians, when the few roads we had were narrow, ungraded and dirt-surfaced, and when wagoning in this section of the country was in its very infancy.

It is the opinion of those who have studied the subject that the Conestoga Wagon was modeled after the old English covered wagon. While the date of its origin is not definitely known, would it not be logical to assume that, following the primitive sled and cart, the very beginning of wagoning in the Conestoga section of Lancaster County, either on the farms or on the roads, was also the true origin of the Conestoga Wagon and its name as we know it to-day, and that it did not come about through any long consecutive evolutionary process?

Let us assume another proposition, that the Conestoga Wagon (synonymously and formerly called "Dutch Wagon") was conceived and created by the Pennsylvania Dutch in the Conestoga Valley at a time when the first necessity arose there for the use of such a wagon.

Dr. Rush, writing in 1789, says: "A large, strong wagon, (the ship of inland commerce,) covered with a linen cloth, is an essential part of the furniture of a German farm. In this wagon, drawn by four or five horses of a peculiar breed, they convey to market, over the roughest roads, 2,000 and 3,000 pounds weight of the produce of their farms. In the months of September and October it is no uncommon thing, on the Lancaster and Reading roads, to meet in one day fifty or one hundred of these wagons on their way to Philadelphia."

Unfortunately, for a period of nearly a quarter of a century prior to the Revolutionary war, the borough of Lancaster did not have a newspaper.<sup>10</sup> From that time until near the end of the eighteenth century the newspapers printed in Lancaster contained very little local news—most of the space being devoted to events occurring in the large cities—Philadelphia, New York, Boston, etc. Much space, however, was given to advertisements, but very little information can be gathered concerning the makers of Conestoga Wagons, the numbers in use, the customary sizes of wagons, the sizes of wheels, tires, etc. It is greatly to be regretted that more attention was not given to local news, as information of this nature would be an invaluable addition to our history and help in our

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<sup>10</sup> Old Lancaster—Tales and Traditions—Worner.

efforts to visualize the old town and county of Lancaster as it existed in the period succeeding the Revolution. Most of our information must necessarily be gathered from descriptions by travelers.

In the translations now being made from the "Neue Unparteyische Lancaster Zeitung und Anzeigs Nachrichten" (New Unpartisan Lancaster Gazette and Advertising News) some interesting advertisements have been found, establishing the fact that in Lancaster City and Lancaster County taverns had adopted the name "Conestoga Wagon" at early dates. In the issue of October 28, 1789, there is an announcement that John and William Michael have moved into "that old famous tavern 'Sign of the Conestoga Waggon' in the borough of Lancaster, formerly occupied by Mr. Christopher Graffert." Another advertisement in the issue of July 16, 1788, sets forth the price of lots and the advantages of settling in Columbia, Lancaster County. In this advertisement it is announced that those who desire to purchase lots should apply to a representative who had his headquarters at the "Conestoga Wagon" tavern in Philadelphia.

*The Philadelphia-Lancaster Turnpike*—It has been authoritatively stated that as early as 1790 ten thousand Conestoga Wagons were needed for the traffic of Philadelphia alone. This extensive hauling to the only large market in the east brought the need for better roads. Authorized by an act of Assembly in 1792 and finally completed in 1796, the road from Philadelphia to Lancaster, a distance of  $62\frac{1}{4}$  miles, was transformed into a turnpike. The following brief description of its construction gives us an idea of the amount of wagon and coach traffic that, it was anticipated, would pound upon its surface:

"It was the first toll road in the United States, surfaced with broken stone and takes its place in history as being one of the greatest pieces of road ever built. Twenty-four feet of the road-bed, eighteen inches thick in the middle and decreasing each way to twelve inches along the sides, was covered with a stratum of pounded stone. The stones had to be broken to a size small enough to pass through a two-inch iron ring."<sup>11</sup>

Some idea of the enormous amount of freight that passed through Lancaster in 1795 may be obtained from the following observation of Duke Rochefoucault, a celebrated Frenchman, who visited Lancaster for a few days in that year:

"In a recently settled and free country, it is seldom possible to come to any certain results or calculations, relative to trade and commerce. Thus the number of wagons, which are sent from Philadelphia to Lancaster and the neighboring country, with flour

<sup>11</sup> Wayside Inns—Julius F. Sachse.

and other provisions, is not exactly known; yet it is certain, that frequently from seventy to eighty wagons pass through Lancaster in a day; and it is generally believed that Mr. Withins, who some years back, at his own expence, built a bridge on the road to Philadelphia, a mile from Lancaster, on condition of his being entitled to take toll or pontage, clears that way every year one thousand six hundred and fifty dollars, the whole amount of the sum he laid out in constructing the bridge. A person on horseback pays him two pence, and a wagon eleven pence, though he has a right to take eighteen pence for the latter. The gentlemen who had contracted for the construction of the turnpike road are authorized by government to redeem the above toll or pontage, as soon as the road shall be completed.”<sup>12</sup>

The Mr. Withins, as Rochefoucault spelled the name, was undoubtedly Abraham Witmer, who erected a wooden bridge over the Conestoga River between June, 1788, and May, 1789. It was located some little distance north of the present stone bridge, erected in 1800, that spans the Conestoga on the Lincoln Highway, formerly the Philadelphia and Lancaster turn-pike.

Near the east end of Witmer's Bridge was located "that old and excellent tavern stand 'The Sign of the Conestoga Waggon,' kept in 1820 by Marks Groff and for many years previous to that time by Christian Martin.”<sup>13</sup>

At a later period, Josiah Quincy, described the first part of a trip he made from Philadelphia to Washington as follows: "At three o'clock this morning (February 10, 1826) the light of a candle under the door, and a rousing knock, told me that it was time to depart, and shortly after I left Philadelphia by the Lancaster stage, otherwise a vast illimitable wagon, with seats without backs, capable of holding some sixteen passengers with decent comfort to themselves, and actually encumbered with some dozen more. After riding till eight o'clock, we reached the Breakfast House, where we partook of a good meal. We then proceeded through a most beautiful tract of country, where good fences and huge stone barns proved the excellence of the farming. The road seemed actually lined with 'Conestoga' wagons, each drawn by six stalwart horses, and ladened with farm produce.”<sup>14</sup>

The "vast illimitable wagon" referred to was generally known as a stage wagon. A better kind of passenger conveyance was the elegant, comfortable and brilliantly-painted stage coach.

As a poet, Mr. Quincy, spoke of the Conestoga Wagons thus:

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<sup>12</sup> Old Lancaster—Tales and Traditions—Worner.

<sup>13</sup> Lancaster Journal, Friday, May 12, 1820.

<sup>14</sup> An Old Turnpike Road—Jacob Gossler.

“----- Many a fleet of them  
In one long upward winding row.  
It ever was a noble sight  
As from the distant mountain height  
Or quiet valley far below,  
Their snow white covers looked like sail.”<sup>15</sup>

It is generally conceded that the idea of the colors for the American Flag was gotten from the coat-of-arms of George Washington's family. Who knows but that a new Lancaster County Conestoga Wagon, with its vermilion red running gear and sideboards, its Prussian blue body, and its snow-white cover, did not give Betsy Ross, or her advisers, the idea of making the first national emblem in these same three colors!

From the references given, it can be concluded that the Conestoga Wagon originated and received its name near the end of the first half of the eighteenth century, and that by the Revolutionary War period it was rapidly displacing pack horses for transporting freight.

#### CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

To get back to the building of the wagon proper: It was modeled after the old English type of covered wagon and was at all times a home-made product. The building of a Conestoga Wagon required the services of two skilled mechanics, the wheelwright, or wagon maker, and the local blacksmith. John W. Sheaffer, an old resident of New Holland, writing in 1897, gives us briefly an idea of the construction and use of these vehicles. He says: "In 1820 the building of a Conestoga Wagon was more important to the people of the New Country than the construction of several luxurious pullman cars of today are to the present generation. To complete one of these useful wagons from the woods of the forests, fully equipped with bows, feed box, tar pot, and cover, four men would be busily engaged for two months. A finished wagon cost about \$250.00. The wagon weighed from 3000 to 3500 pounds. A wagon carrying four hogsheads required four horses and a five hogshead wagon required six horses. From thirty to thirty-five barrels of flour made a full load. A thousand dollars or sometimes twelve hundred dollars was invested in one of these teams. A careful driver, who would care well for the horses and goods, was selected to have charge of it. Hills, bad roads, thieves and careless drivers were to be watched, and all depended on the driver to make it pay. Usually a squad of teams went together, four or six. The drivers slept in their wagons or on the tavern floor." <sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Stagecoach and Tavern Days—Alice Morse Earle.

<sup>16</sup> History of New Holland—M. G. Weaver.



*Design*—Usually both the wheelwright and blacksmith employed at least one apprentice or helper and it can be said that neither the work of the wood mechanic nor that of the master of the anvil was of greater importance than the other. The wheelwright designed the wagon, after a fashion, of course, but modified it in many details to please the personal whims of his customer. Conestoga Wagons varied in size, height of wheels, number of bows, design of body, sag of bed, ornamentation, etc., etc. The kinds of wood used, the types of iron braces and plates put on by the blacksmith to strengthen the parts, the place of tool box, lazy board, feed box, place of lock levers, etc., and the colors of paint used were uniform in nearly every instance. The writer has made an exhaustive study of this subject, has read much, and has interviewed many persons about it. He has travelled over the entire state in connection with this work and has seen, studied, measured, and taken pictures of many different remnants of the old "inland ship of commerce." There still exists today Conestoga wagons, large and small, from six to eight bows to as many as thirteen bows, some with very low wheels and others with rear wheels over six feet in height.

One wagon is in existence that has a very elaborate coupling pole. It extends far beyond the rear end gate, with a curved end, made that way especially, so that the teamster could roll barrels up over the curved end into the wagon bed with ease. This same coupling pole has an auxiliary pin through it back of the rear axle tree so that if the main or principal pin should break, the wagon could not come apart. Another old remnant exists with the floor of the wagon bed almost worn through in the center by the rims of keystone barrels of the many barrel loads it transported over our rough roads. The writer has seen one very unusual type of Conestoga Wagon bed. It has a seat for the driver attached to the front end of the body, instead of the customary lazy-board type of seat at the side. This peculiar, but elaborate wagon bed is reputed to have been made about 1780 by a wheelwright in Mount Joy, Lancaster County.<sup>17</sup> However, this seat may have been attached after the wagon was completed. Recent wagons sometimes have the tool box at this location.

From careful study and observation of the remaining remnants of the various types of Conestoga Wagons, it will be found that they were not made from any set of specifications, and scarcely any two wagons were alike. The wheelwright used his best judgment and skill in making it durable, and economical in cost. Of course, if he took especial pride in his work, (and he usually did,) he saw to it that the wagon was ornamental regardless of cost.

<sup>17</sup> Now owned by Colonel Henry W. Shoemaker—McElhattan, Pa.

Many of the wooden projections and corners were beautifully carved.

*The Wheelwright*—Probably the most delicate part of the wheelwright's work was the shaping of the axles and the making of the wheels with the proper dish to stand the strain of heavy hauling over all kinds of roads. The dish in the wagon wheel was necessary in order to keep the wheel from collapsing and to brace the wagon during side sway. The axle on the ends of the axle tree were cut cone shaped, for strength and easy removal of wheels. The blacksmith covered the tops and bottoms of the axles with closely fitting flat iron called "a skein." The hubs of the wheels were cut to conform to the axles and the inner wearing surface was boxed at both ends with iron rings. To make the proper dish in the wheel the wagon maker had to cut the mortises in the hub for the spokes so that they set at a slight angle. The tenons on the ends of the spokes and the corresponding holes in the felloes were also cut to the same angle.

The wheelwright used a gauge to assemble the wheel in order to give it the necessary dish. The spokes were driven into the hub with a heavy mallet, each spoke being gauged as it was placed so that the wheel when finished would be properly dished. Too little dish or too much dish would not make a good wheel. If the wheelwright did not get the dish exactly right it was up to the blacksmith to give the wheel a more perfect dish when he put on the tire. These "tricks of the trade" (making wheels and shrinking on tires) were important, but do not come in for detailed explanation in this paper. It can be said, however, that to the wheelwright the making of a good wheel was all important, while the blacksmith was considered an expert if he could make a brake that would work satisfactorily under all conditions.

M. G. Weaver, of New Holland, writes about his father, a builder of Conestoga Wagons. He says: "From 1836 my father, Gideon Weaver, was a builder of Conestoga Wagons during the 'sixties' and 'seventies' in the Conestoga Valley. He continued producing the same style of wagons without canvas tops, and without the full swell of the body, for the use of forges, furnaces, and iron mines in Eastern Lancaster County. I can attest to having seen many forest trees taken from the stump and converted into one of these cumbersome ships of early commerce. They were made by hand with the exception of using a saw and a turning lathe operated by water power.

"The saw mill cut the huge logs into planks, running from four inches down to two inches, by half inch differences in each plank. Another log would contain in its grading, boards of thickness from one-half inch to one and one-half inches. Another log would make the hubs. Several log butts produced the spokes. All

were split and hewn out of the rough by the dexterous use of the hand-axe.

"In this condition the planks, spokes, hubs and boards were ranked in their proper places and re-ranked twice. This lumber was kept under the careful eyes of the wagon maker for three years, before any of it was used in a newly constructed, first-class wagon.

"There were many wagons made with six wheels—the higher set to be used for a trip to Philadelphia; and the lower set to be used on the farm. The wheels used under the front carriage in a trip to the city would be used under the rear part when the wagon was used on the farm.

"The high bodies were different to fit their intended uses. The commercial wagons had high sides with three adjustable chains across the tops to hold them together. The bottom had an enormous double swell, so that barrels, casks, or hogsheads, which constituted many of their loads, would work towards the middle instead of breaking out the sides as the wagons rolled along the road. The body used for hauling charcoal from the mountains had only one swell, but much higher sides and extra top shelvings with extra guard chains.

"The furnace teamster wanted the swell in the bottom, lower sides, with less bend in the top rails. The iron ore men demanded stronger lower sides and movable bottom. Gradually, but surely, the identity of the old ship of commerce has been lost.

"There were four varieties of lumber used in the construction of the early wagons. The axles were hickory and the hubs were of gum. These two parts were the foundation of a good wagon. The heaviest pieces were always seasoned four years before used. On the cut of the wooden spindle, the proper iron plating, and the setting of the ponderous wheels, depended the success or failure of the construction. Any practical teamster, or wagon maker, could tell the quality of a wagon when the many squads or caravans lumbered down the pike.

"All the other parts of the wagon and body were made out of white oak excepting the sides of the body and tool boxes, which were made of half-inch poplar. The white oak sliding board, which extended from the left side under the body, was pushed back under the carriage when not in use. It served as a seat or standing place for the driver when he adjusted the brakes (with a lever at the side of the body). This was a dangerous perch, and a break of the seat might mean death to the driver and destruction to the team and load." 18

*The Blacksmith*—While the work of the blacksmith was of no greater importance than that of the wheelwright in the making

<sup>18</sup> History of New Holland--1928—M. G. Weaver

of a Conestoga wagon, it must be admitted that the smith probably held the more envied position in his community.

"The Pennsylvania Dutch migrating from the Rhenish Palatinate in large numbers between 1685 and 1710 had no lack of master artisans of the anvil. They brought with them many centuries of experience in iron working and found here an abundance of ore together with the necessary fuel for their forges. During the eighteenth century there was hardly a village or crossroad so small that it couldn't boast of a skilled iron worker and blacksmith, whose shop stood where the garage now holds forth. And—make no mistake—he wasn't viewed as an ordinary laborer but was considered a highly respected citizen, often a leader. A glamour of romance surrounded his work and the blacksmith shop was the forum and country club combined. The halcyon dream of the country lad was to grow up and rule the forge, and when an apprentice was needed the smith usually had the pick of the surrounding countryside." <sup>19</sup>.

The following copied from Mr. H. K. Landis's article in the Lancaster "New Era" of June 22, 1929, describes the appearance of a blacksmith shop, the smith at work, and tells about the customary way of putting on a large Conestoga wagon wheel tire.

"The brawny smith stands before his hearth with left hand on the bellows pole, behind him a sturdy anvil and beside it a sawed-off barrel, or a trough, with water; the tongs are in his right hand as he studies the glowing iron; soon it will be on the anvil and sparks will fly as the hammer merrily pounds an old horseshoe into a door bolt. For, the smith was a versatile genius and prided himself on making anything which could be made of iron; necessity was the spur to his genius; whether knives or forks, spoons or ladles, Conestoga wagon iron or trace chains, hinges or latches, iron pans or oven peels,—it mattered little to him. He was there to make things from iron. He even made his tools; all the iron shapers and handles he made and the ring of his anvil was heard by the weary plowmen far across the fields, to remind them to have their plow-shares sharpened more frequently. He knew just what temper to give an axe and how to draw it. Iron was a necessity and the smith was just as necessary. So, they brought their wagons for new tires, their sleds for new runners, their horses for new shoes; wagons, pumps, doors and farming implements had to be ironed. The smith was always busy and the boys stood around in wide-eyed admiration to watch the sparks fly as he welded a wagon tire or broken rod. A mighty man was he.

"A supply of split stumps was kept to heat the ponderous Conestoga wagon tires, and spectators gathered to watch the oper-

<sup>19</sup> The Antiquarian.—March, 1925.

ation of shrinking on the tires. The loose tire was first removed and heated in the forge-fire, cut, bevelled and again welded to the circumference desired, as measured by a 'traveller' or hand wheel. Then the tire was laid on iron or stone blocks and wood piled along its length to heat it. The wheel was placed on a peculiarly shaped trestle, the heated tire was lifted with right-angle tongs by several men, or more often a tool especially designed for this purpose was used. The huge tire was thus placed on the wheel and lustily hammered into place. Water had been placed conveniently and this was poured over the hot tire as soon as it was back on the wheel properly, shrinking it very tightly on the felloe. Sometimes the water was in a trough and the wheel was hung from two posts, the tire being immersed as the wheel was revolved. Sudden or local cooling might have resulted in a broken tire and yet it had to be cooled before the wood was charred.

"Around the shop were many curious tools, such as a barnacle of iron, which gripped the end of the horse's nose if unruly during shoeing. A twitch was used in the same way, consisting of a loop of leather or rope running through the end of a wooden handle. As the handle was turned, the loop tightened and held the horse. As a horse can think of but one thing at a time the twitch bothered him more than did the shoeing and this prevented much forcible conversation.

"The bellows with its wheeze and flop of the valve was a wonderful contrivance to raise the wind. There was a bench with stock taps and dies, an iron vise, compasses, center punches, ornamental punches, a name punch sometimes to put on new work, a charge book or slate, paint for new work which was generally red lead that had to be ground in the paint mill each time it was used, borax or other flux for welding, stock of horseshoe nails made by the smith himself from charcoal or iron nail-bars received from Norway, and many other things. Around the anvil block hung punches, chisels, handled flats or shapes and chisels, and upon a nearby stand was a large selection of shapers. Nearby stood a conical mandrel for making rings and there were special shapers for links used in making chains.

"We must not overlook the helper and his heavy sledge. As much work as possible had to be done before the iron became too cool, and the blows of the small and large hammers alternated rapidly and musically while the sparks flew against leather aprons and sometimes bare arms, making a notable and picturesque scene."

Some of the ironing on the Conestoga wagon was very ornate, especially the tool box, and this work afforded an opportunity for the blacksmith to show what he could do. Many of the hooks and ends or fastenings were elaborate and many of the nuts had curled thumb pieces. There was also an ornate axe socket, and the in-

genious hook and link and link to the chains that kept the wagon bed from spreading almost deserved to be patented.

The blacksmith saw to it that every part of the wagon that needed strengthening or that was subjected to unusual wear was properly ironed before it was turned back to the wheelwright for painting. Many of the parts were almost entirely encased with iron. The tongue was plated with iron almost from one end to the other. The double-tree pin was usually made in the shape of a hammer so that it served a two-fold purpose. The hammer hasp was a favorite place on which the smith stamped or cut his initials or the date of making. The stay chains and stay chain hooks were varied and showy. The "grease table" on the forward hounds was made of heavy iron; the brake lever and rods belonging thereto were also made of heavy material. The wooden axles that entered the hubs, were covered with iron that extended almost around the axle and nearly to the middle of the axle-tree. The ends of the axle were reinforced by a shrunk-on band or cup-like covering containing the linchpin hole.

The wheel hubs were boxed inside and strengthened with iron bands on the outside, and frequently a removable hub cap was placed over the outer end of the hubs to keep out the road dust. All parts of the wagon bed were carefully ironed and braced, frequently as many as two hundred and fifty hand-made rivets being used to hold the poplar lining to the wagon bed frame. Each rivet had a hand-made square strap-iron washer under the head to keep it from wearing into the soft wood. The feed box was covered with strap iron to keep the horses from gnawing it. Of course, as said before, the tool box gave the smith an opportunity to show his artistic skill, and it was not uncommon to see the hasps and hinges of the lid intricately worked out in the heart and tulip design. The blacksmith also ironed all spreaders, double trees, single trees, and made all the chains and other iron fittings that were essential to a wagoner's outfit.

It was not an uncommon thing for the old blacksmiths of the road to work all night at shoeing horses and repairing wagons.

*Harness*—Space prohibits a discussion of many details in connection with the making of a wagon and its equipment. The harness, as well as every other part of the equipment, was home-made, and if taken care of, would last almost an indefinite time. The harness used on the pole or wheel horses was much heavier than that of the leaders and swing leaders. Often the backing bands or breeching of this heavy harness were about eight inches wide and the hip straps six inches wide. The traces were iron chains of short and thick links, with longer links at the end. It required a strong man to throw these heavy gears on the rear horses. The saddle was usually very unique. It was made with

a wooden frame, covered with thick leather and had long, square ends with wide skirts. The stirrups were open, there was no saddle horn and the back edge was low and brass bound. The bridles were often adorned with fancy head bands, rosettes, or pompons, and it was not unusual to see the forelocks of the horses, bell arches, head stalls and rosettes bedecked with ribbons. The hames were made of white oak and in the early days these were secured by splitting stumps along the large root to get a curved piece that conformed to the shape of the hames; this not only required very little shaping with wood-working tools but also increased the strength.

*Team Bells*—Much might be said about the attractive and musical brass bells that hung from arches, the ends of which passed through staples in the hames. Six sets of bells were required for a six-horse team although they were often seen on the road with only five sets of bells. There frequently were five small bells on the lead horses, four somewhat larger bells on the swing leaders, and three still larger ones on the pole or wheel horses. These groups on each horse varied in size so that in all there were a variety of different sizes and tones of bells. The bells usually were the open type, like a hand dinner bell or a school bell. Sometimes bells were mounted on double arches and in some instances the 5-4-3 arrangement lost its popularity, each arch bearing four bells.

For awhile, at least, the custom prevailed in certain parts of of the country that when a team became "Stuck," mired, or was unable to make the grade, the wagoner rendering the necessary assistance appropriated the bells of the unfortunate teamster. From this custom we get the expression "I'll be there with bells." Only first-class teams were supposed to have bells. When a team arrived with bells, the inference was that no trouble was experienced on the way; and, when a team arrived without bells, of course, the inference was that the team was an inferior one and perhaps had to call upon some better team for help, thereby forfeiting its bells.

In addition to having his team fitted out with ornamented harness and brass bells, the prudent teamster carried as a part of his equipment, a water bucket, an axe, extra middle rings, open chain links, rough-lock chains, brake or ice cutters, clevises, extra horse shoes, linch pins, corncobs to stick in the hubs to keep the linch pin from bouncing out, pincers, rope, bolts and nuts, mattress, wagon jack, tar pot, log chain, etc., etc. Often a horse chestnut was carried in the pocket to bring good luck and to ward off rheumatism. One informant declares that sometimes a bulldog was tied to the rear of the wagon and that he was frequently seen pressing against his collar as if to help the horses with their load.

*The Tar Pot*—Der teer lodel, or tar pot, was suspended from a hook on the rear bolster by a leather strap handle which passed through a staple on the rear axle-tree to prevent swaying of the pot. The tar pot, or bucket, was usually made from a small tree and worked down on a turning lathe. Ears were left at the upper end of the bucket through which the ends of the leather handle passed. Knots were tied at the ends of the handle to make it secure. The tar box cover fitted over a dust-proof edge and often had a hole in the middle through which the paddle was stuck, though sometimes a slot was in the edge of the cover or the side of the box. The tar pot had a capacity of six or seven quarts and contained pine tar which came from the Southern turpentine camps. Lard was sometimes added to the tar in cold weather. Tar was used to lubricate the axles and grease bed, and it was not unusual for the teamster to carry a feather in the tar pot to tickle away the squeaks en route.

*The Blacksnake Whip*—Every proud teamster, whether he proposed to use it or not, carried a blacksnake whip. The blacksnake's southern cousin, the whip-snake, was reputed among the ignorant Negroes and Indians to whip his adversaries into submission, and probably because of this similar whipping attack of the blacksnake and the close resemblance of the wagoner's whip to a blacksnake, we may reason why the familiar whip was universally known as "The Blacksnake." The blacksnake whip, an indispensable part of every wagoner's equipment, was about five feet long, thick and hard at the butt, tapering rapidly to the end, with a plaited lash approximately eighteen inches long to which a cracker of silk or eelskin was attached. The whip proper was made of one piece of leather with only one seam and that extending its entire length. The saddler so skillfully did his work that the seam was almost invisible. The hand grip of the whip was usually marked with bands of plaited leather or leather bands ornamented with small brass studs. A strap was sewed to the butt to hang up the whip when not in use. One style of these whips was made with a rawhide interior. There was also another style of these whips known among the wagoners as the "Loudon" whip. The inner part of this whip was an elastic wooden stock and was much approved by the wagoners. It was manufactured in the village of Fort Loudon and was used most exclusively by the regular wagoners on both the Philadelphia-Pittsburgh turnpike and the National Road.

Lancaster was always noted for its manufacture of harness and other wagoning equipment, and one firm in the city is said to have made horse shoes and horse shoe nails during the Revolution and all during the Conestoga wagon era; it is still in business.



The beginning of the nineteenth century found (in addition to the Lancaster-Philadelphia turnpike) other turnpikes leading out of Lancaster city and county, north, south, east, west. For sake of brevity, a description of the teamster's life on these roads, his work, his manner of handling a team, way of feeding, putting up for the night, his personal habits, his dress, and characteristics, nicknames, songs, money in vogue, superstitions, dangers encountered, calamities and his later reminiscences must be omitted.

However, the writer is prompted to say something about the taverns with their elaborate sign-boards and to mention a few of the incidents that happened along the roads. The tavern:

“It stands all alone like a goblin in gray,  
 The old-fashioned inn of a pioneer day,  
 In a land so forlorn and forgotten, it seems  
 Like a wraith of the past rising into our dreams;  
 Its glories have vanished, and only the ghost  
 Of a sign-board now creaks on its desolate post,  
 Recalling a time when all hearts were akin  
 As they rested at night in that welcoming Inn.”<sup>20</sup>

There appears to have been an abundance of taverns, not only in the cities, but one every mile or so along the high roads of travel. One writer of old says that the portraits of half the kings of Europe, of many warriors and statesmen, and of numerous things animate and inanimate made the streets of Lancaster an out-door picture gallery.

These conspicuous tavern signs in the form of fields or disks about four feet by five or six feet and mounted on a stout sign-post, attracted the attention of travelers by their individuality and enabled even the most illiterate to determine the names of the places where they were allowed to stop as well as the places they were not allowed to stop. There were in Lancaster County alone such taverns as The Black Horse, The Hickory Tree, The Sorrel Horse, The Fish, The Lamb, The Swan, The Western, The Red Lion, The Hen and Chickens, The Grape, The Plow, The Sign of the Wagon, The Globe, The Hat, The Green Tree, The Eagle, The Three Crowns, Cross Keys, The Sign of the Buck, The Sign of the Ship, The Sign of the Stage and many others distinguished by pictures as well as names.

Frequently, from the lower end of the sign-board, was suspended the swinging tail board, bearing usually in glaring gilt letters, the landlord's name. Often the landlord chose for the

<sup>20</sup> James Newton Matthews.

name of his tavern the name of some dignitary and had his sign embellished with a painted bust of his favorite hero. Among these Washington, of course was chief, but LaFayette, Lee, Gates, Wayne, and other Revolutionary generals, and Hancock, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Franklin and other great statesmen, were in this way common enough.

The war of 1812 had, however, brought to the front a new batch of celebrities worthy of all honor; chief among whom was Jackson who was almost deified, especially by the democrats during and after his great success as a statesman. Nevertheless, the bold and commanding figures of Scott, Harrison, and Perry graced many an old-time tavern sign as it swayed and screeched in the wintry blasts that swept the hills, the mountains, and the valleys of our grand old state. On not a few signs, as also on the sides of the great old ten-plate stoves to be found in the barrooms, were to be seen Commodore Perry's gallant ship "Lawrence," encircled with the undying words of the brave commander of the "Chesapeake," Captain James Lawrence: "Don't give up the ship!" Often times these signs were painted by itinerant artists of skill; their work was excellent and of it their owners were quite proud.

Jacob Gossler, a resident of Columbia, writing many years ago, gives his recollections of a Front Street scene, in that town. He says: "My father kept the inn, or tavern, on the street fronting the river, not far from the entrance to the bridge; the road passed directly by the house, and, as a boy, I had ample opportunity to notice the daily panorama moving past—east and west, north and south, coaches and wagons; carriages and horses; immense herds of cattle from the far west and southwest, on their way to eastern cities; droves of horses, swine and sheep; and even turkeys, some with heads proud and erect, others with tired, drooping wings—all quietly following the leader.

"Projecting from the second-story of the Inn, on an iron cross-bar, swung an image of General George Washington in courtly coat, sombre 'tights,' and buckled shoes, and at his side a splendid sword—and, in spite of the wind and rain and exposed position, he preserved his awful serenity—and condescendingly looked down on the suspended 'Sorrel Horse' which pranced constantly but ineffectually in front of the rival Inn, on the opposite corner. I thought the sign a remarkable work of genius and have often since wondered why it was not presented to adorn some museum or make famous some art gallery!

"The stern dignity of the Father of his Country, and his severe and majestic attitude, have never been effaced from my memory; nor has any other picture I have ever seen so completely realized my conception of Washington! I have seen pictorial representations of General Andrew Jackson, with his stiff, bristling

upright hair, that might, possibly, have had a more terrifying effect on the British; but nothing that could so effectually suppress all attempts at familiarity on the part of soldiers and civilians, friends or foes, as this swinging sign to which I look back with so much reverence!"

As the wagoning business grew, competition became keener, and tavern keepers resorted to advertising for new business. The following appeared in the Lancaster Journal under date of May 12, 1817, and will serve as an illustration of such advertising:

### WESTERN HOTEL

#### "Sign of the Wagon"

The subscriber informs his friends and the public generally, that he continues to keep a house of public entertainment, in Orange Street, corner of Water Street, in the borough of Lancaster, where travellers or boarders may be conveniently accommodated, either by the week or day. Being provided with a spacious yard and sufficiency of stabling, sheds for horses and wagons, also with all kinds of horsefood, waggoners will find it an advantageous and convenient place to stop at. He flatters himself by a strict attention to his business, and by always keeping the best liquors, to merit a share of the public patronage.

John Landis.

### WAGON TRANSPORTATION

By the first half of the nineteenth century Lancaster County had its reputation established as the Garden Spot of the World and its produce was being transported to all parts of the country. Wheat went out as barrels of flour; the rye and corn as barrels of whiskey; the flaxseed as barrels of oil. Some of the other articles that helped to make up the loads were tobacco, beer, glassware, hemp, iron, etc. On return trips (called back-loading) such materials as were manufactured in the large cities and needed in our local communities were brought here and further westward to a ready market.

Lancaster County people being the greatest tobacco producers in the country, will naturally be interested to know that the stogey cigar originated in Conestoga Wagon days, and was made especially to please the appetites of the long-distance teamsters. The following newspaper article which appeared in print many, many years ago, is self-explanatory:

"It appears that in the old days, the drivers of the Conestoga wagons, so common years ago, used to buy very cheap cigars. To meet this demand a small cigar manufacturer in Washington, Penn-

sylvania, whose name is lost to fame, started to make a cheap 'roll-up' for them at four for a cent. They became very popular with the drivers and were at first called Conestoga cigars; since by usage corrupted into 'stogies' and 'tobies'. It is now estimated that Pennsylvania and West Virginia produce about 200,000,000 tobies yearly, probably all for home consumption."<sup>21</sup>

During the early years of the nineteenth century Conestoga Wagons were traveling the highways by the hundreds, yea, thousands, and our country was truly in the Conestoga Wagon era. To say nothing of the enormous amount of westward wagon traffic going out of Lancaster County by way of Harrisburg, some idea of the volume of transportation passing through and from Lancaster County toward the "Gate to the Golden West" can be gathered from the following: "One old resident of Columbia, Pa., many years ago made the statement that he had known of as many as one hundred and fifty Pittsburgh teams awaiting at one time to be ferried across the Susquehanna and that many were compelled to wait two or three days before they could get their turn." Another writer says: "The business was very large. Some days it is recorded two or three hundred vehicles would line the shore. These were 'chalked' and required to wait their turn on the boats."<sup>22</sup>

Picture in your mind these great wagons traveling in strings, each drawn by six well-matched horses of the genuine Conestoga strain, clad in ornamented harness of the home-made period, adorned with elaborate sets of brass bells—mastered by the proudest of all teamsters—and you will have a fairly accurate conception of the admirable vehicles of transportation that attracted the attention of our forefathers generations ago.

From Thomas Buchanan Read's writings we gather the following sentimental verse:

"The old road blossoms with romance  
Of covered vehicles of every grade  
From ox-cart of most primitive design  
To Conestoga Wagons with their fine  
Deep-chested six-horse teams, heavy gear  
High hames and chiming bells, to childish ear  
And eye entrancing as the gathering train  
Of some sun-smitten pageant of old Spain."

When one thinks of the old roadways over which these teams travelled in the glorious days, he is prompted to quote from our American poet, Foss:

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<sup>21</sup> Stagecoach and Tavern Days—Alice Morse Earle.

<sup>22</sup> An old Turnpike Road.—Jacob Gossler.

"Let me live in a house by the side of the road

Where the race of men go by—

The men who are good and the men who are bad,

As good and as bad as I.

I would not sit in the scorner's seat

Or hurl the cynic's ban—

Let me live in a house by the side of the road

And be a friend to man.

I see from my house by the side of the road,

By the side of the highway of life,

The men who press with the ardor of hope,

The men who are faint with the strife,

But I turn not away from their smiles nor their tears,

Both parts of an infinite plan—

Let me live in a house by the side of the road

And be a friend to man."

The great volume of freight hauling by Conestoga Wagon required many teamsters and wagoning was an important business. Julius F. Sachse has the following to say about Conestoga Wagon teamsters. "This hardy class of men, brought forth by the times in which they lived, formed a clan, as it were, by themselves, the same as the Lancaster County Germans, and became particularly fitted for their occupation. The majority of this class were honest, industrious and trustworthy and noted for their endurance. Although all were addicted to the constant use of whiskey, they rarely came under its baneful influence that it interfered with their vocation. There were exceptions to this rule, however."<sup>23</sup>

*Anecdotes*—A few incidents that happened in the lives of these teamsters are here given: Under date of May 28, 1830, we have the following account of a road accident. "A Lancaster stage loaded with thirteen passengers was overturned at Fahnstock's Tavern twenty-one miles from Philadelphia. Mr. McClure and his daughter from Carlisle were seriously hurt and others considerably bruised. The accident happened when a Conestoga wagon loaded with iron kept the middle of the road and the driver of the stage in trying to pass went over the bank. No blame was attributed to the driver of the stage but rather the teamster of the wagon who cared little for the safety of the lighter vehicle."<sup>24</sup>

The tavern at Paradise, just outside of Lancaster and at one time called "The Sign of the Stage" was noted for its entertainment of many distinguished guests. The old "upping block," which stood in front of this tavern and upon which General Lafay-

<sup>23</sup> Wayside Inns—Julius F. Sachse.

<sup>24</sup> History of New Holland—M. G. Weaver.

ette alighted and stood to receive a number of persons who were eagerly awaiting his arrival during his visit to this country in 1825, is owned by Judge C. I. Landis, and still stands in front of his country home. The following story to illustrate class distinction is told about the Sign of the Stage. "A wagoner applied for admission at this tavern where only stagecoach travelers were lodged. The tavern keeper finally consented to keep him under the condition that he leave early in the morning before any of the aristocrats might see him. After he left, the stable boys and hostlers got busy and cleaned up all the straw and litter in front of the tavern so that there would be no indication of having entertained a wagoner over night, when the aristocrats arose from their night's lodging."

Another incident is told that happened on the Lancaster-Philadelphia turnpike while a bridal party was traveling toward the latter named city by carriage. One of the drivers, probably the groom, drove against the leaders of the team of one of the wagoners. He may have been paying too much attention to the bride and not enough attention to his driving. The wagoners overtook the party at the next tavern and called upon the gentleman for redress. A bystander consented to intervene for the groom, but the groom said he could take his own part and that no one needed to intervene for him at his own party. The whole affair ended peaceably although it nearly turned into a free-for-all fight.

An old wagoner from Western Pennsylvania, shortly after the Civil War period had this to say about Lancaster County teamsters: "Two brothers, Abner and David Peirt, natives of Lancaster County, at one time left their home county and came to the western part of the state where they secured jobs as teamsters on the National Pike, among wagoners of all kinds, including a few colored men. The easterners were called the 'Pennsylvania Dutch' teamsters and were admired for their steadiness, straight-forwardness and honesty. Their teams were frequently commented upon as being of the genuine Conestoga strain."<sup>25</sup> This is only one example to show that of all the teams and teamsters on all the roads in Eastern United States, the Pennsylvania Dutch teamster with his Conestoga breed of horses, from Lancaster County, ranked second to none.

In the gubernatorial campaign of 1835 Joseph Ritner, often called "The Wagon Boy of the Alleghenies," because he had been a wagoner in his early days, was the teamsters' choice for the highest office in the state. At taverns, and other places where the teamsters gathered, and often while driving in strings, along the pike, wagoners were heard singing the following verse in support of their candidate for Governor:

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<sup>25</sup> The Old Pike—T. B. Searight.

Wote nunner der Irisher  
der Josef Ritner is der mon  
der unser Staat regenon kon.

Ritner was elected. During his administration the famous Buckshot War, in which our noted Thaddeus Stevens was a prominent actor, occurred. Space prohibits any further mention of the teamster's road life.

*Decline of Wagoning*—The railroads and canals put an end to the Conestoga wagon as a long-distance freight carrier. "When, at last, the Conestoga horse yielded up the palm to the Iron horse, and it became manifest that the glory of the old road was departing, never to return, the old wagoners, many of whom had spent their best days on the road, sang in chorus the following lament:

"Now all ye jolly wagoners, who have got good wives  
Go home to your farms, and there spend your lives.  
When your corn is all cribbed, and your small grain is sowed,  
You'll have nothing to do but curse the railroad."<sup>26</sup>

For a time after the Conestoga Wagon era these covered wagons were used on the farm, but when the factory-built wagons were put on the market, farmers drew many of the old covered vehicles back of their buildings into open fields or orchards, burned them to ashes and sold the spoils to junk dealers; or, allowed their wagons to disintegrate to decayed wood and rusted iron.

Within the past few years there has been seen in the Conestoga Valley of Lancaster County a very unusual type of Conestoga Wagon bed. It was flared at the sides as well as the ends, the bottom of the bed being not more than a few feet in width. This very antique wagon bed resembled a boat in shape and reminded those who saw it of the old "inland ship of commerce." The running gears were entirely gone, and the much dilapidated box was used by the unconcerned owner as an out-door coal bin.

We still have well preserved specimens of the Conestoga Wagon within our county. Among these is the Gingrich wagon which has participated in many parades and celebrations. The opinion seems to be that this wagon is one of the early types. It stood partially unprotected from the weather for about thirty-five years. For the past quarter of a century it has taken part in many historical pageants and has nobly and historically represented the county of its nativity. It is still in an excellent state of preservation.

In speaking of this wagon, the writer wishes to call attention to the photograph of it taken in 1921 in front of the ancient tavern

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<sup>26</sup> The Old Pike—T. B. Searight.

at Oreville, on the old Harrisburg turnpike, a few miles west of the city of Lancaster. This is undoubtedly the best and most popular photograph ever taken of a Conestoga wagon. A large colored copy of this photograph, owned by the late Walter C. Hager, colored by Mrs. Laura Steigerwalt Schopf, Lancaster's talented local artist, (claimed at the time of its making to be the most extensive enlargement of a photograph that had ever been made), hung in the hall of The Lancaster County Historical Society for several years. It was later removed to Hager's Store.

The writer recently visited an old church in Dauphin County around which a certain benefactor build a glass cage so that the church might be seen but preserved indefinitely without being disturbed by the curious or destructive souvenir hunters. What more glorious contribution to the history of Lancaster County could a charitable-minded person make than to see to it that some good type of Conestoga Wagon (as well as the accessories going with it) be placed in a building especially erected for that purpose, or in a reserved section of an historical county museum! A glass enclosure, of course, would make the preservation of these precious things more secure. The Landis Valley Museum has an extensive collection of such material. But, most of these relics are sold and lost to the county forever.

In conclusion, I would very much like to see that the members of The Lancaster County Historical Society take up this work. A paper could be prepared on the origin, breeding, use, pride in raising, and final extinction of the most remarkable breed of draught horse ever developed in America, the Conestoga Horse. Lancaster County deserves the credit for the development of this animal, and too much can not be written about it. Someone could write at length on the Conestoga Wagon Teamster and of his many hardships and experiences on the road. Also much could be written upon other Conestoga Wagon subjects as were given only passing mention in this brief paper. Write on these things until that civic pride within your bosom is expressed to the point where the records of the proceedings of the Society will literally blossom forth with the historical things you are in duty bound to prepare in legible form and pass on to the generations to come.

Remember the days of old,  
Consider the years of many generations:  
Ask thy father, and he will shew thee;  
Thy elders, and they will tell thee.

—Deuteronomy, XXXII—7.

THE END.



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