

# Lancaster's Contribution to Cumberland in the Fire of 1833

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

ONE of the most fearful conflagrations, and, perhaps, the most destructive, that had ever befallen any town in our country, occurred in Cumberland, Maryland, on Sunday, April 14th, 1833. The fire commenced about ten o'clock; and the wind being high the flames soon spread with great rapidity, giving but little opportunity for saving any movable effects. Seventy-five houses, in the principal part of the town, were soon in ruins. Many citizens were left without more than their clothing. The loss was estimated to be approximately \$262,000.00.

In the Lancaster Journal of Friday, April 26th, appeared a communication, addressed to John Reynolds, editor of the paper. It was published over the signature of "Many Citizens," and was as follows:

"The late awful destruction by fire of the town of Cumberland, Maryland, has thrown upon the charities of the world hundreds of suffering citizens, who, by this disaster, so unexpected and distressing, have been at once hurled from comfort to destitution. When a similar visitation overtook the people of Fayetteville, N. C., the people of Lancaster were not backward in affording their aid; and when the sufferings of the inhabitants of the Cape Verde Islands were made known to them, they freely contributed to their relief.

"The present situation of the citizens of Cumberland calls as loudly for their sympathy; and, with a view to devise measures for their relief, it is respectfully proposed that a meeting be held in the court house to-morrow evening, (Saturday, the 27th instant) at 7 o'clock, at which time it is hoped the humane and charitable will not fail to attend."

A public meeting was not held until more than two weeks later. In obedience to the call of John Mathiot, mayor, citizens of Lancaster convened in the court house on Monday evening, May 13th, to take into consideration plans for extending financial aid to the sufferers. Mayor Mathiot was appointed chairman; and John F. Steinman, secretary. A committee, consisting of four persons from each of the several wards, was appointed to secure contributions. The committee consisted of the following: George Louis Mayer, Samuel R. Slaymaker, William Frick, John Wind, Dr. Peter Bier, Philip Metzger, Christian Keefer, P. K. Brenneman, George

Bryan, Henry Carpenter, Benjamin Ober, Charles Gillespie, Henry Longenecker, John Ehler, William Cooper and Peter Reed.

George Louis Mayer was appointed treasurer.

The committee got promptly to work and performed its duties in a comparatively short time. Nine days after the town meeting was held, the treasurer sent the following communication:

“Lancaster, Pa., May 22nd, 1833.

“Gentlemen:

“I herewith annex John Eberman’s check on the Bank of the United States, for \$465.29 in behalf of the citizens of this place for the benefit of the sufferers. Though our aid may be of small amount, yet it has been cheerfully given, and all our regret is it was not in our power to forward more.

“With sentiments of deep feeling for your loss, and hopes for your future welfare and happiness, I remain,

“Respectfully yours,

“GEORGE LOUIS MAYER.”

“To John Hoyer, Thos. J. McKaig, Richard Beal, Wm. McMahan, James J. Carlton, Esquires, and the Rev. Mr. Johns, Committee of Distribution for the Cumberland sufferers.”

Seven days later, Mr. Mayer received an acknowledgment, as follows:

“Cumberland, Md., May 29th, 1833.

“George Louis Mayer, Esq.,  
Lancaster, Pa.

Dear Sir:

“Your generous favor of the 23rd instant, came to hand in due time, and has been laid before the Committee of Distribution. At a meeting of that committee it was unanimously

“Resolved, That the thanks of the committee acting in behalf of the sufferers by the late fire at Cumberland, be tendered to the citizens of Lancaster, Pa., for their very liberal and truly generous donation of \$465.29 in aid of those who have suffered by the desolating calamity which has befallen our unhappy town.

“Accept, sir, for yourself, and tender to your committee, our sincere thanks for your benevolent exertions in our behalf; and may a just reward flow to you and the citizens of Lancaster, from that source whence alone it can. By order of the committee.

“Very respectfully, Sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“Thomas J. McKaig,

“Secretary.”

# The Society of Weavers

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

**W**EAVERS of the borough of Lancaster met at the house of William Boys on Saturday, March 6th, 1813, and formed themselves into a Society, in order to advance their trade to an equality with those of other mechanics, which they believed themselves entitled to do. George Hartly was appointed chairman, and William Buck, secretary. They unanimously agreed to a scale of prices for various kinds of weaving, a list of which was published in the Lancaster Journal of Thursday, March 18th, 1813.

The following weavers were present: D. Donoughey, Terrance McGrann, George Brooks, Hugh McGrann, Jacob Shirtz, Joon Slater, Samuel Wilson, Henry Mintooh, John Henslinger, Arnold Peters, Robert Isherwood, Conrad Yost, John Garlagh and John Culbert.

In the Lancaster Journal of Thursday, April 22nd, 1813, appeared a song, which was published by request. It contained four stanzas, of eight lines each, and was sung at a meeting of weavers in the borough of Lancaster.

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## Cotton Transported Through Lancaster

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

In the Lancaster Journal of Friday, May 20th, 1814, appeared the following:

“About 200 wagons, loaded with cotton, within two months have passed through this place on their way to the northward and eastward. Many of them were from Savannah, Georgia, bound as far eastward as Providence, Rhode Island. The expense of this land carriage is immense. In some cases the drivers have been compelled to sell part of their loads to enable them to pay their way.

“When we consider that the whole of this produce of our soil might have been transported from Georgia to Maine in a few schooners, at a trifling expense, we cannot help considering at the same moment how much we have to sacrifice in this *war against ourselves.*”

The Lancaster Journal was bitterly opposed to the United States entering into a state of war with Great Britain in 1812; and the editor, William Hamilton, lost no opportunity of attacking those who supported the measure.

# Lancaster's Contribution to Cape Verde Islands in the Famine of 1832

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

**I**N the autumn of 1832, information reached Lancaster that the inhabitants of the Cape Verde Islands were in a most distressed condition. They had had no rain for two years, their crops had failed, and thousands were dying of starvation. Several vessels had touched at the Islands, and, going to other ports, reported the suffering heart-rending in the extreme. Cries of "Send us bread!" were heard from every quarter. It was estimated that 10,000 people of the Island of Fogo would perish unless relief should reach them promptly. The Lancaster Journal of Friday, December 14th, 1832, in appealing to the public, stated as follows:

"Under these distressing circumstances, will the citizens of Lancaster withhold their liberality? Will it be said that the appeal of our suffering fellow-creatures shall pass unheeded? Providence has blessed this land with plenty; we have some to spare. Let us then remember the divine precept, to 'feed the hungry'; and, in human language, 'Learn the luxury of doing good'."

On Wednesday evening, December 5th, 1832, a meeting of citizens of Lancaster was held at the court house. John Mathiot, mayor, was appointed chairman; George B. Withers, secretary; and William Kirkpatrick, treasurer.

A committee of four persons from each ward was appointed to collect funds, as follows:

## North-east Ward.

George Louis Mayer  
H. Keffer

George B. Withers  
William Frick

## South-east Ward.

John Eberman  
T. L. Barry

Jacob Demuth  
J. F. Heinitsh

## South-west Ward.

John Myer  
George Krug

E. C. Reigart  
Henry Carpenter

## North-west Ward.

George Musser  
C. Hager

C. Keefer  
Adam Diller

It was stated that donations of wheat, flour, etc., from people in Lancaster county who felt disposed to aid the sufferers in the Cape Verde Islands, would be thankfully received by the treasurer or by any member of the committee.

The committee diligently sought to accomplish the task assigned to it. The Lancaster Journal of Friday, December 28th, 1832, contained a statement as follows:

“Collected in the North-west ward .....	\$ 89.18
“ “ “ South-west ward .....	78.75
“ “ “ North-east ward .....	140.39
“ “ “ South-east ward .....	21.68
	<hr/>
	\$330.00”

This sum was transmitted by the treasurer, William Kirkpatrick, to Robert Ralston of Philadelphia, and doubtless reached those for whom it was intended, in due season.

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## **Monsieur Surrier, French Ambassador, Passes Through Lancaster**

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

The Lancaster Journal of Friday, May 13th, 1814, contained the following:

“Monsieur Suerrier, the French Ambassador, passed through Lancaster a few days ago on his way to Philadelphia.”

Author: Worner, William Frederic.

Title: Lancaster's contribution to Cumberland in the fire of 1833  
/ by William Frederic Worner.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): Fires--Maryland--Cumberland.  
Cumberland (Md.)--Fires and fire prevention.

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society, 1930.

Description: [19]-20 p. ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 34,  
no. 1

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.34

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

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