

# Thomas McKean Inaugurated Governor of Pennsylvania in the Borough of Lancaster

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

**I**N the autumn of 1799, Thomas McKean, a signer of the immortal Declaration of Independence, was elected governor of Pennsylvania. The Republicans of the borough and county of Lancaster celebrated the victory in an elaborate manner. Subscriptions had been obtained for an entertainment which was held in front of Mr. Boyd's house, on Thursday, November 7th. The Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser of Wednesday, November 13th, stated that the occasion was "announced as a day of festivity by a morning gun."

The fare consisted of 780 pounds of the best beef, two shoats, weighing 142 pounds, two roasters, weighing 35 pounds, and four hams, weighing 63 pounds,—a total of 1020 pounds of meat; 125 loaves of bread, two hogsheads of beer, 12 gallons of the best French brandy and 34 gallons of excellent Madeira wine.

The provision was cooked in the best manner possible; and was placed on a table, specially erected for the purpose, 300 feet long. The feasting began at 1.30 o'clock in the afternoon.

Emanuel Carpenter, Esq., acted as president, and William Barton and William Slaymaker as vice-presidents. Four hundred and twelve Republicans were seated at the table, and a large number had to stand.

The flag of the borough of Lancaster, containing the arms of the state of Pennsylvania, with the stripes of the Union, was displayed. A temporary stand having been erected, a band of musicians, assisted by a number of amateurs from the borough, graced the festival.

Seventeen toasts were drunk, a corps of Republican militia firing after each toast. "Volunteers" were given by Emanuel Carpenter, the president, Timothy Matlack, Captain Lefevre and Jacob Carpenter. A German song, specially composed and set to music for the occasion, by a Republican of the borough, was sung, accompanied by the music. This song inspired the heart of every German in the borough with patriotic joy. A song in English, specially composed and set to music for the occasion, by another Republican in the borough, was also sung, accompanied by the music.

Those present then formed themselves into line, with the president and vice-presidents at the head, and paraded through the principal streets of the borough. At the court house, which at that time stood in the centre of Penn Square, they gave three cheers for Thomas McKean, the governor-elect, and returned to

the place of entertainment. After spending some time there, they again paraded in the evening, in the same form. A large lantern, with the name Thomas McKean and the date 1776 on it in transparent letters, was carried in the parade. The members, with lights in their hands, marched through many of the streets in the borough, and saluted, with three cheers, a number of prominent Republicans in front of their homes.

The Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser stated:

“The number of lights was great, far beyond expectation, and its appearance really splendid. The effect when seen on the various elevations of the streets, so peculiarly adapted to such a scene, was truly brilliant, and greatly surprised, and equally pleased the friends of liberty,—especially the Republican ladies of the borough.

“The day was uncommonly favorable for this civic fete; and, as is common among our Republican citizens, not a single offense was given by any person among them; although provocations were not wanting from their opponents, which might have led to retributions of a serious nature. The company was dismissed in form, and in perfect good order, at 9 o'clock in the evening.

“Note. When the subscribers and their more immediate friends had retired from the table, the provision was not withheld from the bystanders, who partook freely thereof.”

The Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser of Wednesday, December 11th, 1799, contained an announcement that Thomas McKean would arrive in Lancaster borough on the following day. Republicans residing in the borough and neighborhood were invited to assemble at noon at Conestoga bridge, wear branches of laurel in their hats, and escort the distinguished visitor to his lodgings. A committee, consisting of William Barton, Timothy Matlack, William Bausman, Samuel Humes, Michael Gross, Daniel Franck, William Michael, Leonard Eichholtz, Francis Bailey, John Rose and Peter Reed, was appointed to invite the Republicans to the proposed meeting, to arrange the procession, and to notify the governor-elect of the time and place at which the escort would attend.

On Thursday, December 12th, Thomas McKean, escorted by two detachments of volunteer cavalry, one from Captain Leiper's company of Philadelphia, the other from Captain Bernard's of Delaware county, arrived in Lancaster borough. They were met at Witmer's bridge [over Conestoga river, about a mile east of the town, on the Philadelphia turnpike, now Lincoln highway] by officers of the militia, the volunteer company of The Republican Blues, and citizens of the borough and vicinity. From the bridge they proceeded to the lodgings of the governor-elect, where, after giving three cheers, “they dispersed in that orderly and decent

manner which, on every occasion, designates the conduct of Republicans.”<sup>1</sup>

Tuesday, December 17th, 1799, the day appointed by the Constitution of Pennsylvania for the inauguration of the governor, Thomas McKean met the legislature of the state in the Representatives’ chamber at 12 o’clock noon. The oath of office was administered and he was proclaimed governor of Pennsylvania, after which he delivered a short address to the members of the Senate and House of Representatives.

At 4 o’clock in the afternoon, Mr. McKean and the retiring governor, Thomas Mifflin, partook of a sumptuous dinner, specially provided for the occasion, at the house of Leonard Eichholtz. Members of the legislature, several congressmen and a large number of citizens of Lancaster and adjoining counties, were present. The speaker of the House of Representatives presided at the entertainment. The governor was seated at his right hand. Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg was vice-president. After dinner, sixteen toasts were drunk. A “volunteer” was also given by Timothy Matlack.

After the company had retired from the banquet hall and the governor had returned to his lodgings, a great number of citizens paraded through the principal streets of the borough, with lights in their hands, attended by a band of music, and bearing three lanterns with transparent labels significant of the occasion. They saluted the governor with three cheers, and also some of the most distinguished Republicans, in a manner which did honor to themselves and those whom they saluted. As they passed and repassed the governor’s lodgings he appeared and returned their salute.

<sup>1</sup> The Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser, Wednesday, December 18th, 1799.

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## Opposition to Cherry Fairs in Strasburg

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

The Lancaster Journal of Friday, June 10th, 1808, contained the following communication, dated “Strasburg village, June 2nd. 1808”:

“Agreeably to notice, a large number of the inhabitants of this village assembled this day at the house of Mr. Michael Rine, with a view to adopt measures for preventing what has been usually called a ‘cherry fair’, from being held in this place for the future on the Sabbath day.

“That such a thing should ever have taken place on that Holy Day, is certainly a reproach to any people calling themselves Christian; and the disorders thereby introduced—such as intoxication,