

LANCASTER BOROUGH.

From the founding of Lancaster till 1742, it had been moving along without a charter, but, at this time, the inhabitants felt they needed a stronger form of Government. The town now having three hundred houses, and all kinds of manufacturing being represented, the citizens desired the town chartered, and made application for the same. Through the influence of James Hamilton, Esq., a charter was granted and signed by George Thomas, Lieutenant Governor, under John, Thomas and Richard Penn, Proprietors, May 1st, 1742.

The following excerpts from the Borough charter will be of interest:

“George, the Second, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, king, defender of the faith, &c. To all to whom these presents shall come, greeting: Whereas, our loving subject, James Hamilton, of the city of Philadelphia, in the province of Philadelphia, esquire, owner of a tract of land whereon the town of Lancaster, in the same province, is erected, hath on behalf of the inhabitants of the said town, represented unto our trusty and well beloved Thomas Penn, esquire, one of the proprietors of the said province, and George Thomas, esq., with our royal approbation, Lieutenant Governor thereof, under John Penn, William Penn and Richard Penn, esqs., true and absolute proprietors of the said province and the counties of New Castle, Kent and Sussex, upon Delaware, the great improvements and buildings, made and continuing to be made in the said town by the great increase of the inhabit-

ants thereof, and hath humbly besought them for our letters patent under the great seal of the said province to erect the said town of Lancaster into a borough according to certain limits and bounds hereinafter described, and to incorporate the freeholders and inhabitants of the same with perpetual succession, and to grant them such immunities and privileges as might be thought necessary for the well ordering and governing thereof.

"Therefore, know ye, that we, favoring the application of the said James Hamilton, on behalf of the said freeholders and inhabitants, and willing to promote trade, industry, rule and good order amongst all our good subjects of our special grace, certain knowledge have erected and by these presents do erect the said town of Lancaster into a borough forever, hereafter to be called by the name of Lancaster, which said borough shall extend, be limited and bounded in the manner it is now laid out, pursuant to the plan hereunto annexed; and we do further grant and ordain that the streets of the said borough shall forever continue as they are now laid out and regulated.

"And we do nominate and appoint Thos. Cookson and Sebastian Graeff, to be the present Burgesses, and the said Thomas Cookson shall be called Chief Burgess within the said borough, and Michael Byerly, Mathias Young, John Dehuff, John Foulke, Abraham Johnson and Peter Worrall, assistants for advising, aiding and assisting the said Burgesses in the execution of the powers and authorities herein given them, and Alexander Gibony, to be High Constable, and George Sanderson to be Town Clerk; to continue Burgesses, Assistants, High Constable and Town Clerk, until the 25th day of September, which will be in the year of our Lord 1744, and from thence until others shall be duly elected or appointed in their places, as is hereafter directed."

A section then declares that "the said Burgesses, freeholders and inhabitants and their successors hereafter shall be one body corporate and pollick in deed and name," and shall be able to receive and possess lands, liberties, &c. It also provides for the use of a seal.

A section then provides that the Burgesses, Assistants and freeholders, together with such inhabitants, housekeepers within the said borough, as shall have resided therein at least for the space of one year, and hired a house and ground of the yearly rental of five pounds upwards on the 15th of September, which will be in the year of our Lord, 1744, and on that day yearly forever thereafter unless it happens to fall on a Sunday, and then on the next day following, publicly to meet in some convenient place in the borough, to be appointed by the Chief Constable, and then and there to nominate and elect, and choose by the ballot two able-bodied men of the inhabitants of the borough to be Burgesses, one to be High Constable, one to be Town Clerk, and six to be Assistants within the same for assisting the Burgess in managing the affairs of the said borough, keeping peace and good order therein.

The charter then continues: "And we do further grant for ourselves, heirs and successors to the Burgess, freeholders, inhabitants and housekeepers of Lancaster, to have, hold and keep within the said borough two markets in each week, that is to say, one market on every Wednesday and one market on Saturday of every week of the year, forever in the lot of ground already agreed upon for that purpose and granted for that use by Andrew Hamilton, as by the deeds thereof to John Wright and others, Trustees for the county of Lancaster, and also two fairs therein every year, the first to begin on the first day of

June next ensuing and to continue that day and the next and the second of said fairs to begin on the 25th of October and to continue that day and the next, and when either of those days shall fall on Sunday then the said fair to be kept the next day or the Tuesday, together with the free liberties, customs, profits and emoluments to the said markets and fairs belonging and in any wise appertaining forever."

Although the town was chartered and Burgesses appointed, after the Revolution it was again chartered on June 19th, 1777, under the new government.

Governor Thomas appointed Thomas Cookson Chief Burgess, and Sebastian Graeff Burgess. Their assistants were Michael Byerly, Matthias Young, John Foulke, Peter Worrall, John Dehuff and Abram Johnson, this forming the first government of the town. They met for the first time on the 15th of May, 1742, and their first act was to give thanks for the charter. On receiving the charter from James Hamilton, and for the great services he had done the town in procuring the same, it was unanimously agreed that the Burgesses and their assistants wait on him and return him the thanks of the Corporation for his services, and request him to return the thanks of the Corporation to His Honor, the Governor.

At this same meeting the Burgesses and their assistants commenced to frame laws for the new Corporation. The first law was a due observance of the Lord's Day. The law read that no tradesman, workman or laborer shall do any manner of work on the Lord's Day, and every offender of this law shall pay twenty shillings for the use of the poor, providing nothing in this act shall prohibit butchers from killing and selling on that day, during the months of June, July and August, be-

fore nine o'clock in the morning and after five in the evening.

Then came a law to prevent the selling of liquors on the Sabbath and requiring the constables to search taverns, and persons found tippling on the Sabbath are to pay a fine of one shilling six pence, and the keeper of such place ten shillings, both for the use of the poor. There was a proviso in this law which made it very liberal, that travelers, inmates, lodgers and others may be supplied with victuals and drink for refreshment only.

After this came laws regarding the building of stalls in the market place, and compelling farmers and butchers to bring their goods to market and not to be hawking them from house to house, under a penalty of ten shillings for the use of the Corporation.

A fine of ten shillings must be paid by any one who allows his chimney to take fire so as to blaze out at the top.

Blacksmiths are not allowed to burn charcoal in or about the town, or within a half mile of the limits, under penalty of thirty shillings' fine for the use of the Corporation.

There was a law against butchers blowing up their meat with pipes (making it more subject to taint and infection), and exposing it for sale. All such meat shall be seized by the Corporation. All bakers not making their bread sufficient weight (as agreed by the Assembly) their bread shall be seized and given to the poor.

It was also agreed and ordered that any person galloping their horses through the town hitched to wagons shall pay a fine of thirty shillings, and every person riding horses on the pavements shall pay a fine of five shillings, both for the use of the Corporation.

A law was passed against smoking on the streets. John Passmore, who was Prothonotary at the time, was the

first man fined. He is said to have been a man of remarkable corporation, weighing 450 pounds.

These are some of the laws made by the first Burgesses for the governing of the Corporation, and, never having been repealed, it is a question if they are not still in force.

In the charter of the Corporation provisions were made for holding fairs, two days in the spring and two days in the fall, from which the Corporation received a revenue of from five to eighteen pounds. This was kept up till the borough became a city, with the exception of a few years during the Revolution.

The Corporation seemed to be without a Treasurer till 1761, when Isaac Whitelock was selected as Treasurer, and 15 pounds, 18 shillings given in his hands. He held the office till 1764, when Casper Shaffner was settled on to fill his place. The Corporation handed over to him 81 pounds, 6 shillings and 3 pence.

The first notice of any attention being paid to the fire department was at a meeting held July, 1765, and at this meeting it was agreed a house should be built large enough to contain at least three or five engines in the northwest corner of the market house, to take up three pillars and not any more than four feet in the inside of said house.

John Feltman and Isaac Fetter are hereby appointed to build the house as they think most advantageous. Nothing more is said of the fire department until May, 1776, when Charles Hall presents a bill for 7 pounds, 10 shillings, for taking care of and repairing the fire engines.

During the Revolution, or near the close of it, the citizens became alarmed about the distress among the prisoners of war who were confined here. A meeting of the Burgesses was held on July 13th, 1732, when the following

resolutions were passed: "At this meeting the dangerous consequences that are likely to arise in the barracks from the many and circulating disorders now among the prisoners of war in this place were taken into consideration. Unanimously agreed that it is the sense of the Corporation that the brick store house on the common in the borough of Lancaster be immediately converted into quarters for the reception of the sick, who are immediately to be removed.

"Agreed likewise that the Continental stables be converted and fitted up into a barracks for the reception of such troops as may necessarily require quarters in this place."

At this time General Hazen, with his troops, was quartered at the Cat Tavern, on Prince street. He kept the prisoners from annoying and molesting the citizens, and the Burgesses, on the 2d of November, 1782, called on him with the following resolutions: "We, the Burgesses, and their assistants, of the Corporation of Lancaster, do, with the utmost satisfaction, return you and your officers our most sincere and warmest thanks for the many and distinguished proofs for your regard and attention to us and the inhabitants. Your generous undertaking of erecting barracks, for the reception of your troops, and others that may require hereafter quarters in this place, and thereby easing the inhabitants. Your faithful and steady attention as Superintendent of the prisoners of war and your spirited conduct in general in promoting the public Weal, merits the Approbation and thanks of this incorporated body." Wm. Parr and John Hopson were appointed a committee to wait on Brigadier General Hazen with the above resolution.

During the troublesome times of the Revolution the fairs had been done away with, till at a meeting held on

the 26th day of May, 1783, it was resolved, "That the borough of Lancaster hath for several years been deprived of holding their fairs on account of an oppressive, but, at length, glorious ended war. It is further agreed that the boards and poles be immediately provided for the building of stalls and re-establishing the former custom of holding fairs in the borough, to the great advantage and benefit of the good inhabitants. In consequence of which Jacob Glatz, Jacob Krug and Valentine Breneisener, of this Board, are appointed a committee to fix plans for erecting stalls for approaching fairs." The next fair did not take place till June, 1783. After the Corporation had paid for the repairs and building of new stalls, they had a balance in the treasury of 4 pounds, 8 shillings and 6 pence.

This is the last mention made of the trying time of the Revolution.

At a meeting of the Corporation on the 4th day of April, 1795, the subject of erecting a building for public offices was brought up. A general meeting of the citizens of the town and county was called, at which it was the unanimous opinion that the Corporation of the borough should grant a spot of ground, part of the ground allotted for the market place, that may be thought suitable for erecting a public building, which ground should be granted free of expense.

At the next meeting of the Corporation it was agreed that the Commissioners of the county, with the approbation of the court, may erect a building for public offices on the present site of the market house, that is to say, the east end of the same. The breadth of the building shall not be over twenty-eight or thirty feet from south to north, and the length forty-five to fifty feet from east to west.

The Judges held a meeting on the first day of January, 1795. John Joseph

Henry, President of the Courts of General Quarter Sessions of the Peace, in and for the county of Lancaster; Robert Coleman, Frederick Kuhn and Andrew Graff, Esquires, Associate Judges of the Court, do, by virtue of the presentment of the Grand Jury and orders of the county, erect the public offices on the ground which is allotted for the purpose. They further order and direct the said Commissioners to procure plans for the said building.

After the completion of the building for public offices the Corporation found their market too small, so a meeting of the Corporation on the 2d of March, 1798, to take into consideration the building of a new market house, was held. At this meeting came Charles Smith, Henry Derring, William Kirkpatrick and John Miller, Jr., as a committee from Lodge 43, to consult and agree with the Corporation respecting the privileges of erecting a superstructure upon the market house for the use of the Free Mason Lodge, No. 43. The committee handed the Corporation the following proposal: The Corporation to erect pillars and arches sufficiently strong to support the superstructure and roof, which pillars and arches to be at the expense of the Corporation. The lodge to build the superstructure and roof of the building and to floor and cell.

The Corporation granted the right to erect such superstructure by the Lodge, provided a room shall always be reserved for the use of the Corporation. Signed by order of the Corporation.

PAUL ZANZINGER, C. B.

Signed by order of the Lodge.

C. SMITH,

HENRY DERRING,

JOHN MILLER, JR.,

L. LAUMAN.

The elections of the Burgesses were held in the Court House, but their

meetings were always held at some public house, probably not to be far away from refreshments.

These are some of the incidents that happened and some of the laws that were passed during the days of the Burgesses. In 1818 the borough got too big, as the town did in 1742. The last meeting of the Burgesses was held the 6th day of April, 1818, and the borough was chartered as a city March 20th of the same year.

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