

Political Divisions of Lancaster County.

Lancaster county was organized in 1729. Part of Berks county was taken from it in 1752, and Dauphin county was also taken from it, in 1785. Lebanon county was taken from Lancaster and Dauphin in 1813.

The following townships embraced the present territory of Lancaster county in 1729: Drumore, Sadsbury, Martic, Conestoga, Hempfield, Donegal, Earl, Warwick, Manheim, Lancaster, Leacock, Lampeter, Salisbury, Caernarvon, Strasburg, and Cocalico, sixteen in number. Manor was organized in 1730, being taken from Hempfield. Brecknock is first mentioned in the Commissioners' records in 1740, but is by some regarded as one of the original townships. Colerain and Little Britain were organized in 1738, being taken from Drumore. Rapho was organized as the twenty-first township of the county in 1741; it was detached from Donegal. Bart was taken from Sadsbury in 1744. Elizabeth was taken from Warwick in 1757. Mount Joy constituted the twenty-fourth township of the county; it was taken from Donegal in 1759 or 1767.

No more new townships were formed or organized previous to 1800. It may be of interest to know how many election districts existed at such an early date, how constituted, where located, and tracing the formation of additional ones until the present time.

From the organization of the county until 1784 the County and State elections were held at the county seat.

By an Act of Assembly, passed September 13, 1785, Lancaster county was erected into four election districts, constituted as follows:

First, Lancaster borough, Lancaster township, Manheim township, Manor township, Lampeter township, Conestoga township; polling place, the Court House, at Lancaster borough.

Second, Little Britain township, Drumore township, Martic township, Bart township, Colerain township, Sadsbury township, Strasburg township; polling place at the public house of Colonel James Porter, in Drumore township.

Third, Donegal township, Mount Joy township, Rapho township, Hempfield township, Elizabeth township, Warwick township; polling place at the public house of Captain Hugh Pedan, in Rapho township.

Fourth, Salisbury township, Earl township, Caernarvon township, Brecknock township, Cocalico township, Leacock township; polling place at the public house of Thomas Henderson, at New Holland, in Earl township.

By an Act of Assembly, passed September 19, 1786, Strasburg township was added to the First District; Hempfield, Elizabeth and Warwick townships were detached from the Third District and added to the First District.

The polling place of the Third District was changed to the public house of Michael Nocales, in Donegal township.

Cocalico township was taken from the Fourth District and also added to the First District.

In 1792 the polling place of the Second District was changed to the Unicorn Hotel, in Drumore township.

In 1795 Cocalico and Elizabeth townships were erected into a separate election district, known as the Fifth District, with the polling place at the public house of Henry Miller, in Cocalico

Roads, situated midway between the present village of Lincoln and Ephrata borough.

The Sixth District was established by an Act of Assembly March 31, 1797, composed of Strasburg, Sadsbury, Bart and a part of Martic township, with the polling place in the village of Strasburg.

The Seventh District was erected by an Act of Assembly April 8, 1799, composed of Warwick and Rapho townships, with the polling place in the village of Manheim.

By the same act the polling place of the Third District was taken to the public house of Alex. Boggs, near Elizabethtown.

The Court House at Lancaster borough was the polling place, but each township had a separate Election Board, as the returns show. The Election Boards were elected the Saturday previous to the State or county elections, at such places as designated by the township constable, which differed at times from the regular State polling places.

In order to establish, change or abolish an election district it had to be done by an Act of Assembly, until 1854, when the Legislature conferred that authority on the Courts of Quarter Sessions in the various counties of the State, for the reason that they knew more about the necessities of the same. Boroughs were incorporated in the same way previous to this Act of Assembly, but since by the Court of Quarter Sessions. These Courts always had the authority to establish and form new townships.

Thus it will be seen that voters, in order to cast their ballots, had a considerable distance to travel, and the vote cast was light; nothing like the enthusiasm of our day was manifested.

In 1801, the Eighth District was formed. Salisbury township was taken

from the Fourth District and Sadsbury township from the Sixth District, and constituted the Eighth District, with the polling place at the public house of John Young, in Salisbury township.

In 1802 the Ninth District was established. Brecknock and Caernarvon were detached from the Fourth District, and constituted the new district, with the polling place at Churchtown, in Caernarvon township. This district was abolished in 1803. These two townships were again put in the Fourth District.

The same year the Fifth District was changed by detaching part of Cocalico township and attaching part of Warwick township, and moving the polling place from Henry Miller's Hotel, near Ephrata, to Nathaniel Lightner's Hotel, also in Cocalico township, owned by John Erb, great-grandfather of the writer of this sketch, located in the present village of Clay. This house has been a polling place to this day, even when it was kept as a private house by George W. Steinmetz, from 1855-1868, who is the father of the writer. In fact, the writer himself first saw the light of day in this house.

Another change occurred in 1803. A new district was formed from parts of Brecknock and Cocalico townships, known as the Ninth District, with Reamstown, in Cocalico township, as the polling place. This came to stay.

In 1804 Lancaster borough was divided into two wards, and had two Election Boards, but still one polling place.

In 1805 Donegal township was detached from the Third District, and constituted the Tenth District, with Maytown as the polling place.

The Eleventh District was also organized by taking Caernarvon and part of Earl from the Fourth District, and part of Salisbury from the Eighth

District, with the polling place at Churchtown.

Martic township was put into a separate district in 1807, and Bart in 1808, being taken from the Second and Sixth Districts respectively.

In the latter year Salisbury was restored to the Eighth District, and part of Sadsbury put in the Eleventh District.

The next change took place in 1810, when Colerain township was detached from the Second District and established as the Fourteenth District.

Two years later Little Britain township was detached from the Second District and constituted a new district, known as number fifteen.

In 1813 four new districts were formed, Lititz, Marietta, Columbia and Sadsbury township.

Lititz District was detached from Manheim and embraced that part of Warwick that did not continue to vote in Manheim, or that did not vote in the Fifth District, in Cocalico township, at John Erb's Hotel, now the village of Clay.

Marietta embraced that part of Donegal that did not vote in the Tenth District, at Maytown, from which it was taken. Part of Donegal was also attached to the Third District, at Elizabethtown.

Columbia, which became a borough a year later, comprised parts of Hempfield, Manor and Rapho townships.

The two first named parts were detached from the First, or Lancaster Borough, District. This was the first time this district was disturbed. The part of Rapho attached to Columbia was detached from Manheim.

Sadsbury township was established as the Nineteenth District by being detached from the Eighth and Eleventh Districts, respectively, and thus Salisbury township was constituted the Eighth District, with the White Horse Hotel as the polling place.

In 1816 Strasburg became a borough. From 1759 or 1767 until 1818 no new townships were organized. In the latter year West Hempfield was organized as the twenty-fifth township of the county by the division of Hempfield into East and West Hempfield townships. Lancaster and Columbia continued to be the polling places of both townships, respectively. Lancaster borough was incorporated as a city this same year.

From 1813 until 1819 no new election districts were established. In the latter year Leacock township was detached from the Fourth District and formed as the Twentieth District. Brecknock was taken from the Ninth District and organized as the twenty-first District, with Muddy Creek as the polling place. Mount Joy township was detached from Maytown, also a part of Donegal township, and both formed the Twenty-second District, with the town of Mount Joy as the polling place.

The polling place of Sadsbury township was changed.

In 1822 the Twenty-third District was established at Petersburg, in East Hempfield township, parts of East Hempfield and Manor townships being taken from the First, or Lancaster, District.

In 1824 Lampeter township was taken from the same district and formed the Twenty-fourth District.

In 1825 Conestoga township was also detached from this district and constituted the Twenty-fifth District.

Elizabethtown was erected into a borough in 1827, the third in the list.

A year later two new districts were formed, Washington, in Manor township, which was also established as a borough the same year, and Gross', in Cocalico township, known as John Gross' Hotel, located in the present borough of Ephrata, and the same has

been a polling place to this day. The said John Gross was a great-grandfather of the writer of this sketch, and obtained this hotel from his father-in-law, Col. John Wright, of Revolutionary fame.

Thus, Manor township had three polling places, neither of them in the township's territory, viz.: Lancaster city, Petersburg, in East Hempfield township, and Washington Borough. Cocalico township, as then constituted, had two election polls, Reamstown and Gross'. The area of this township was somewhat reduced in 1815. Previous to that year the present village of Clay separated it from Elizabeth township. In the latter year the present village of Lincoln became the dividing line; Elizabeth township desiring more territory, because a goodly portion of its former territory was now embraced in Lebanon county.

In 1829 Bainbridge, then in Donegal township, and Manheim township became the Twenty-eighth and Twenty-ninth Districts, respectively.

The polling place for Manheim township was established in the town of Manheim, and changed in 1830 to Neffsville.

Marietta became a borough about 1830, and part of Warwick township was added to the Seventh District.

In 1833 the Thirtieth District was established at Millerstown, now known as Millersville, in Manor township.

In 1833 West Earl township was formed, and became a separate election district the following year.

So far there were twenty-six townships, five boroughs, a city, and thirty-one election districts.

In 1836 West Hempfield township was detached from Columbia borough, and Strasburg township was detached from Strasburg borough, and established as the Thirty-second and Thirty-third Districts respectively.

Part of the Twenty-seventh District was added to the Fourth District.

Manheim was incorporated as the sixth borough in 1838. The same year Cocalico township was divided into three distinct townships, West Cocalico, East Cocalico and Ephrata. The same year Indiantown, in Manor township, and Schoeneck, in West Cocalico township, were made the Thirty-fourth and Thirty-fifth Districts, respectively. The name Schoen Eck, pretty corner, was given because of its surroundings, and, situated on an elevation, gives a splendid view of the surrounding country. It is now spelled without the capital E. West Donegal township was also established in this year.

In 1839 the Thirty-sixth District was established at Blue Ball, then in Earl township.

In 1840 the Thirty-seventh District was formed by dividing Strasburg township into two election districts; the new polling place was located at Williamstown.

In 1841 West Lampeter township was formed as the thirtieth township of the county, by being detached from the Eastern part, which was called East Lampeter.

Four new election districts were formed in 1842—Rohrerstown, in East Hempfield township; Lancaster township, both being detached from the First, or Lancaster City District, and the last that remained so long with their first love, were made the Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Districts, respectively. East Lampeter was constituted the Fortieth District, although regarded as the oldest part of the original township. Little Britain was divided into two districts by establishing a poll at Oak Hill.

The same year Conoy township was established by being taken from West Donegal, and Bainbridge continued as the election poll.

The islands on the river were attached to Conoy township.

In 1843 Paradise township was organized as the thirty-second township of the county by being separated from Strasburg, and Williamstown continued as the election poll.

The parts of Warwick heretofore included in the Fifth and Seventh Districts were detached and attached to the Warwick township district, at Lititz.

In 1844 Upper Leacock was established as the thirty-third township and Forty-second Election District by being taken from Leacock township and the Twentieth District, and West Donegal was added to the Third District.

It is not generally known that there was a township in this county which had only a few years' existence, and which was named for William Henry Harrison, President of the United States. Such a township, however, was projected, laid out and named in 1844. In that year a petition was presented to the Court of Lancaster county, signed by citizens residing within the bounds of the Twenty-second Election District of the county, composed of parts of Rapho, Mount Joy and Donegal townships, stating that inconvenience, trouble and expense were incurred by reason of the distance to which the petitioners were subjected in attending their respective township elections, and praying the erection of a new township out of portions of each of the three above-named townships. Upon that petition the Court appointed Christopher Brenner, Henry M. Reigart and Thomas Lloyd viewers. Two of the viewers met and returned a report creating the new township. It was called "Harrison," and was embraced within the Twenty-second Election District of Lancaster county. The report of the viewers was made to the August Court of Quarter Sessions, 1844, and on February 3, 1845, the

Court set the report aside. The matter was certiorated to the Supreme Court, and there the proceedings on the report of viewers were quashed. The attorneys were Messrs. Stevens and Penrose, and the opinion of the Supreme Court was delivered by Justice Rogers. Argument was had before the Supreme Court on December 8, 1846. By Act of Assembly, passed in 1846, Harrison township was divided into two election districts, Mount Joy and Sporting Hill, but the act did not become operative, owing to the adverse decision of the Supreme Court. However, Mount Joy was called Harrison in the election returns for 1846, and was repealed in 1847. The case is fully reported in 5th Barr, p 447.

In 1845 Fulton township was organized by being detached from Little Britain. It was named after Robert Fulton, who was born within its bounds. It is known as the Fifteenth Election District, but, strictly speaking, it is the Forty-first, and was so regarded in the election returns as late as 1848. However, the latest established poll is in the territory of Little Britain.

The polling place of Lancaster township was changed.

In 1846 Penn township was formed by a division of Warwick township. It was given two election polls, neither of them in its own territory, the one in Manheim borough and the other in the town of Lititz, being the Forty-third and Forty-fourth Districts, respectively. These were abolished in 1848, and Penn township given a polling place in its own territory, and known as the Forty-third District.

In 1850 that part of Manor that formerly voted in Lancaster township, but resided near the Thirtieth District, now voted in the Thirty-fourth District, at Indiantown.

Adamstown was established as a bor-

ough in 1850, and became the Forty-fourth Election District of the county.

Mount Joy was incorporated as the eighth borough in 1851. Earl township was again divided this year, when East Earl was formed and Blue Ball continued as the polling place.

Lancaster city was divided into four wards in 1852, and as many polls.

Elizabeth township was divided into two election districts, the Forty-fifth being established at Pennville, the Fifth continuing at the present village of Clay. The one at Pennville was abolished in 1854. In this year three new townships were formed: Clay from Elizabeth, Pequea from Conestoga, and Providence from Martic, and constituted the Forty-fifth, Forty-sixth and Forty-seventh election polls respectively. This seems an injustice to Clay, because Brickerville, in Elizabeth township, became their polling place and called the Fifth District, and had never served in that capacity before; whereas, Clay's polling place was established in what is now Clay township as the Fifth District, as already shown in 1803. Ephrata township also received a small portion from Elizabeth township when Clay was formed.

In 1855 Eden township was separated from Bart and erected as the fortieth township and the Forty-eighth Election District. The Court of Quarter Sessions now had the authority of establishing election districts.

In 1859 the Upper District of Mount Joy was detached from Elizabethtown and the Forty-ninth poll established at Lehman's School House, in Mount Joy township; now the polling place is in H. S. Hottenstein's Warehouse, on the Manheim road.

In 1860 West Donegal was detached from Elizabethtown, and the fiftieth poll established at Rutt's School House, in said township.

Three districts were detached from

Mount Joy borough in 1861, the Lower District of Mount Joy, polling place at Breneman's School House; present polling place at Florin; Rapho, Strickler's School House, present poll on the premises of Emil Eby. East Donegal, with polling place at Springville, now called Florin.

Columbia was divided into two wards in 1862.

In 1863 the Newtown District, in Rapho township, was detached from the Strickler's School House District in the same township. The Newtown School House is the polling place.

In 1867 Lancaster city was divided into nine wards and as many polls. Columbia received three wards and as many polls, but they are still regarded as the First and Sixteenth Districts respectively.

What is known as Manor New was established in 1869 as the Fifty-fifth Election District.

In 1870 West Hempfield township was divided into four election districts: Silver Spring, Mountville, Norwood, Northwestern, the first named being the original district established in 1836.

Washington borough was divided into two wards in 1876.

In 1878 Sporting Hill and Union Square, in Rapho township, were detached from Manheim borough and established as the Fifty-ninth and Sixtieth Districts.

East Donegal, Lincoln School House, was detached from Marietta in 1879. The present poll is in West Marietta.

East Drumore township was set apart from Drumore in 1883 as the Forty-first and last township of the county and the Sixty-second election District. Mechanics' Grove is the polling place of the new township and Chestnut Level of the original part.

Landisville, in East Hempfield township, was established the same year.

In 1885 Terre Hill, in East Earl town-

ship, was detached from Blue Ball and established as the Sixty-fourth District. Strasburg was divided into three wards.

In 1886 Manheim borough was divided into three wards. Salisbury township got three additional election districts, Spring Garden, Cambridge and Gap. Milton Grove, in Mount Joy township, became a separate district in 1888.

Lititz was made a borough and a separate district, as was East Warwick, in Warwick township.

Earl township was divided into two election districts in 1890, Martindale being the new district. Penn township was also divided into two districts in 1891. Unionville is the new district. The old one is called South Penn.

Ephrata was incorporated as the tenth borough the same year, and is called the Seventy-third Election District.

In 1892 Ephrata township was divided into three districts, Akron, Lincoln and Murrell. Akron received the number rightly belonging to Ephrata, the original poll since 1828.

Lancaster city was divided into nineteen precincts the same year, and Marietta borough was divided into three wards.

In 1893 West Earl township received two election districts, Farmersville being the new one.

Quarryville was established as the eleventh borough this year, and as the Seventy-seventh Election District.

Columbia's three wards were increased to nine. This was declared illegal by the Supreme Court in 1894. However, in 1896, the local Court again established nine wards, which are still in force.

In 1894 Christiana borough was established, and both Brecknock and West Cocalico townships were divided

into two election districts, Bowmansville and Blainesport, respectively, being the Seventy-ninth and Eightieth Districts.

In 1895 Akron and New Holland became boroughs, and the Eighty-first and Eighty-second Election Districts respectively.

In 1898 Mount Joy borough was divided into two wards.

In 1899 Penn township was given the third election district, which was established at Junction.

During the present year two new districts were formed. Manheim township, which is one of the largest townships in the county, had but one election poll until this year (1900), when a polling place was established at the Stock Yards Hotel, in said township.

Denver has been incorporated as the fifteenth borough and forms the Eighty-fifth Election District of the county.

In 1785 we had one borough, twenty-four townships and four election districts in the county.

In 1900 we have a city, fifteen boroughs, forty-one townships. These townships have twenty-eight additional election districts, which makes a total of eighty-five. The city is called one district, but has eighteen additional polling places. Six of the boroughs have sixteen additional polling places. Twenty-five townships and nine boroughs are not divided. Thus we have a grand total of 119 election polls in the county, an increase of 114 in 104 years. What will it be in A. D. 2000?

The first record accessible to the writer was 1796, when there were but five election districts in the county. Their location is not given, but from later records there is reason to believe they were located as follows:

First District, at Lancaster borough.

Second District, at Unicorn, Drumore township.

Third District, near Elizabethtown, in Mount Joy township.

Fourth District, at New Holland, in Earl township.

Fifth District, at Henry Miller's hotel, in Cocalico township, known as Miller's Cross Roads, situated midway between the present village of Lincoln and Ephrata borough.

How they were constituted we cannot tell. We only know that on and after 1800, as the Sheriff's proclamation, published in the Lancaster Journal of that year, shows, which was published in detail, according to the Act of Assembly of February 15, 1799. We have shown that there were but five election districts in 1796. The Sixth District was established at Strasburg in 1797.

The Lancaster Journal files of 1798 and 1799 are missing.

We are able to give nearly a full and complete history from 1800 to the present time. There were but seven election districts or polling places in the county just a century ago.

The First District embraced Lancaster borough, incorporated as such in 1742, and the following townships, as then constituted: Lancaster, Manheim, Hempfield, Manor, Conestoga and Lampeter.

The Second District embraced Little Britain township, Drumore township, Colerain township and part of Martic township; located at Unicorn, in Drumore township.

The Third District embraced Donegal township and Mount Joy township; located near Elizabethtown, in Mount Joy township.

The Fourth District embraced Caernarvon township, Brecknock township, Earl township, Leacock township and Salisbury township; located at New Holland, in Earl township.

The Fifth District embraced Cocalico township and Elizabeth township; located at Henry Miller's hotel, near Ephrata, in Cocalico township.

The Sixth District embraced Strasburg township, Sadsbury township, Bart township, and the part of Martic township not in the First District; located at Strasburg.

The Seventh District embraced Warwick township and Rapho township; located at Manheim. Established since 1797.

Author: Steinmetz, H. L.

Title: Political divisions of Lancaster County / by H. L. Steinmetz.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): Lancaster County (Pa.)--Politics and government--1865-1950.
Lancaster County (Pa.)--Politics and government--1775-1865.
Lancaster County (Pa.)--Politics and government--To 1775.

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society, 1900-1901.

Description: [36]-51 p. ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 5, no. 2

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.5

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

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