

MAYOR JOHN PASSMORE.

We are indebted to Dr. John A. M. Passmore, of Philadelphia, for much of the following explicit account of John Passmore, Esq., first Mayor of Lancaster, Pa.:

John Passmore was the son of William and Sarah (Elliott) Passmore. His grandparents were John and Elizabeth (Harris) Passmore. His grandfather, John Passmore, came from the parish of Hurst, county of Berks, England, with his parents, John and Mary (Buxey) Passmore.

John Passmore was born January 12, 1774, in Newcastle, Del. At an early age he left home and went to Lancaster, Pa., where, after a few years, he entered the office of Hon. James Hopkins, as a law student. He was admitted to the practice of his profession in 1797. He married, December 18, 1809, Elizabeth Alexander (nee Gilpin), a widow, who died March 1, 1814, and was interred at Lancaster. John married a second time, January 2, 1817, Mary, daughter of Rev. Joseph Clarkson, D. D., of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Mary was born September 10, 1790. In 1809 Governor Snyder appointed John Passmore Prothonotary of the Lancaster District of the Supreme Court, comprising the counties of Lancaster, Berks, York and Dauphin. In 1818 he was appointed one of the aldermen of the city of Lancaster, and in the same year was also appointed the first Mayor of that city, a position to which he was twice re-elected, discharging the duties of the office for three years.

He was, in some respects, an eccentric man. It is related that James Buchanan, afterwards President of the

United States, came into Mr. Passmore's law office one day and took down a book from a shelf. When he had finished reading it he laid it on the table and departed. Passmore waited until Buchanan had started up the street, then he called to him: "Jim, come back here." When he returned he told him to put the book where he had found it. His children were Rev. Joseph C. Passmore, D.D., of Milwaukee, Wis.; Rev. William C. Passmore, late of Hammonton, N. J., and one daughter, Grace.

On March 20, 1818, the General Assembly passed an act incorporating the city of Lancaster, which went into effect May 13, 1818. John Passmore was appointed by Governor Snyder as the first Mayor. The first Council was composed of the following named gentlemen: Select Council—John Hubley, Samuel Humes, Robert Coleman, William Jenkins, William Kirkpatrick, Samuel Slaymaker, John F. Steinman, Jacob Lemon and William Dickson.

Common Council—Adam Reigart, Jeremiah Mosher, Jacob Scherer, Geo. Musser, Jacob Duchman, Jacob Eicholtz, Luke Brown, George Brungart, Ingham Wood, John Reynolds, Philip Heitshu, John Weaver, John Burger, Jasper Y. Smith and John Christ.

Mayor Passmore lived at the northwest corner of Orange and Shippen streets, in the house in which Miss Kelly now lives. His family were originally Quakers, but his father, having married out of the church, he was no longer acknowledged as one of these people. He married an Episcopalian, and attended St. James' Church, this city. He was a man of great weight, at one time weighing 480 pounds. He died in 1827, and there was no hearse in the city large enough to hold him, so the coffin was taken to the grave on a large wagon. In 1818, before he was appointed Mayor, he was holding the position of alderman. There was a

borough ordinance passed prohibiting smoking on the street, and he was the first man fined for violating the law.

There was sold in Philadelphia, on February 26, 1901, a letter from Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Edward Shippen, dated at Philadelphia, April 14, 1804, to Judge Yeates, of Lancaster, in which were some notes about Mr. Passmore, which are worth preserving. Among other things, the letter stated: "We have a report that the Judges broke up the Court at Lancaster very suddenly.....The opinion here is so universal that the Judges would do their characters great injustice by refusing to ride, that I have taken pains to contradict the report....The Grand Jury have found the bill against Passmore a true bill. The jury consisted of nineteen men, called from the different counties, thirteen of whom were Democrats; yet there was not a dissenting voice to finding the bill. Our Prosecutor is, I assure you, by no means so popular a man here as at Lancaster; indeed, he is generally despised. Our cause is the popular one, and most people express unreservedly their abhorrence to the strides of the Assembly....."

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