

# The Early Settlement and Population of Lancaster County and City.

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It is to be regretted that our fathers and grandfathers were so indifferent to the important events of their time, to the many stirring scenes and occurrences of that early period, as not to have put them on record for the instruction and entertainment of those who were to come after them. Among them were men strong of mind, vigorous of intellect, students of history and well equipped in every way to picture for us the many stirring incidents and experiences that must have fallen into their lives. And yet, the fact is, that of all the men who lived and died in this city and county between 1730 and 1825 there is hardly one who has left behind him an autobiography, memoir or diary of the events that fell into the first hundred years of our recorded history.

There is so much that we would like to know, so much of interest to us now, but which must ever remain unrevealed, that I sometimes feel that I cannot forgive those old-time worthies for their indifference to the needs and wants of their posterity. It is very true that much has come down to us, but indirectly and unintentionally. They led busy lives, each one in his chosen path, but when the times and the occasion demanded it lent their services to the public weal and it is through official letters and public documents that most of what we know concerning them has reached us.

Blot out, in your imagination, all the Court House records, all the offi-

cial papers written by citizens of Lancaster before, during and after the Revolutionary War, and what worth the reading would there be left to us? The remainder would hardly be worth the preservation. We fail to understand why those intelligent men did not, for their own private satisfaction, as well as for ours, their descendants, pass down to us in tangible form the story of their lives and times. The student of our early local history is confronted all along the way with unsettled questions, matters merely hinted at and doubts without number, the solving of which will always remain to vex and puzzle him.

Indeed, I may almost say that we have more direct information concerning our ancient burg through the notes and journals of strangers who passed through the place or spent a few days here than we have from the men and women to the manner born. How satisfactory, for example, is the old journal of Witham Marshe, of Maryland, written at the time of the big treaty here, in 1744, or the following extract from the diary of Lieutenant Anbury, of the British Army, who was brought here as a prisoner and related what he saw. The following extract, copied for me by Mr. Sener from the manuscript diary in the library at Harrisburg, will serve to show how we appeared in the eyes of the foreigners and what they had to say about us:

#### **Lieutenant Anbury's Account.**

"December, 1778. At Lancaster met with a curious reception. Story afloat that the country round about was to be given to Baron Reidesil as a reward for his services. People excited and had to be convinced to the contrary. Lancaster was the largest inland town in the United States, containing

about 3,000 Germans and Scotch-Irish. Most of the houses had an elevation before the front door and were entered by ascending high steps, resembling a small balcony, with benches on both sides, where the inhabitants sat and took in the fresh air and viewed the people passing. Many mechanics. Three or four churches (7). Largest pipe organ in America, built at Lititz now in use at the Lutheran Church. Some of the officers went to see this wonderful piece of mechanism, and sent descriptions of it to their homes. Manufacturer had made every part of it with his own hands. It had not only every pipe and stop, but had some pipes of amazing circumference and had keys to be played by the feet, in addition to the regular keys." Such contemporary details are historical in the fullest sense of the word, and of exceeding interest and value.

The story of our early local history has been so often and so well told that the subject has been worn almost threadbare. In reality there is little left to tell and my only intention in the paper I am about to read is to endeavor to make clearer some few points relating to the early settlement and population of the county and city, concerning which I have frequently found there is no little misapprehension. I have little regard for a class of men, who, for want of a better name, I may term hair-trigger historians, who accept tradition for facts, who jump at conclusions and so confound fiction with facts as to cast suspicion on all they say. Truth is said to lie at the bottom of a well, but no one knows how deep that well is until he tries to hoist the truth into the light.

With this introduction, I shall now proceed to take up the subject proper of this paper, which deals with the

early settlement of the county and city and the population of the same.

### Confusion in Early Accounts.

Connected with early Lancaster county is an interesting question that deserves attention, not only because it is germane to the location of the county seat itself, but also because it does not appear to have received the attention its importance deserves. We all know that Lacastern town was laid out in the year following the erection of the county, that is, in 1730. We are also aware that, prior to that time, the best known man in the place was a tavern-keeper, George Gibson by name, whose place was rear a spring, a big hickory tree standing near by it, with a representation of the same on the tavern sign. But who knows who George Gibson was, where he came from and when he came or even the origin of the little information we have concerning him and his tavern, and much else connected with the town, its name, settlement and population? Whenever you come across statements bearing on these questions they appear with quotation marks attached to them, indicating they have been taken from some ancient authority which is not mentioned, and is now unknown.

Is there anywhere an authority, written or printed, that clears up these questions or even throws any light upon them? I confess I have been unable to discover any. Hazard, Day and Rupp and Mombert all quote the story, but they all give it at second hand. The first named says: "When first laid out there was one house in it and that was a tavern, the occupant being a man named Gibson."<sup>1</sup> That is such a glaring misstatement as to be

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<sup>1</sup>Hazard's Register, vol. 4, p. 391.

almost ridiculous, as can be easily proven. Again Hazard says: "When Lancaster was laid out Governor Hamilton offered two places, one known as 'High Plain,' or 'Gibson's Pasture,' and the other as the 'Roaring Brook,' which was on the west. Both sites were finally united and there was a Black Swamp running through it."<sup>2</sup>

That "Roaring Brook" was a considerable water course in early times may be inferred from the fact that a stone bridge was thrown across it on West King street by Councils in 1771, which was the first bridge built within the borough limits. Even as late as 1825 it must have been a brook of some importance, for in that year City Councils granted to Samuel Fahnestock, for a period of twenty-five years, the use of the water in the stream for some establishment he was about to erect on lots 335, 336, 337 and 338 fronting on Water street; the water to be conveyed in pipes not to exceed one foot in diameter and be laid in the middle of the stream; with the further privilege of erecting dams 12 inches high across the waterway.<sup>3</sup>

Let me now direct your attention to a quotation from Rupp's History of the County, which is also marked as having been taken from an earlier authority. He says: "Governor Hamilton made an offer of two places, the 'Old Indian Field,' 'High Plain,' 'Gibson's Pasture,' 'Sanderson's Pasture;' the other, 'Waving Hills,' embosomed in wood, bounded by 'Roaring Brook,' on the west. Gibson resided near a fine spring with a large hickory tree before his door. This was the favorite tree of the Indian tribe who lived in the vicinity, and were called by the whites from that

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<sup>2</sup>Hazard's Register, vol. 8, p. 60.

<sup>3</sup>See ordinance passed by City Councils, on April 15, 1825.

circumstance the 'Hickory Indians.'"<sup>4</sup>

There is confusion here which is not easily straightened out. Were these names, "Old Indian Field," "Gibson's Pasture," "High Plain" and "Sanderson's Pasture," all applied to the same piece of ground or did they represent distinct parcels named after different owners or after some other special locality? And who was Sanderson himself? Hazard clearly says the "High Plain," or Gibson's Pasture," which would indicate that the two names were applied to the same piece of ground. Both Hazard and Rupp agree in saying that Governor Hamilton offered two places or sites for the erection of the Court House and Jail. Here again there is a conflict of authorities. The site finally agreed upon for the public buildings was found to be still vested in the Penn heirs. How, then, could Governor Hamilton have been able to offer them to the county authorities for their uses? However that may be, the lands known by the above names were evidently very small tracts, because we know pretty definitely that Gibson's tavern was located on East King street, not far from the Square, while "Roaring Brook," which was the Water street creek, bounded the second tract offered, "Waving Hills," on the west. These two offered sites were not more than two blocks distant from each other. The inference, therefore, is that these various "pastures" or fields were merely small clearings in the woods that then covered most of the Lancaster-town site. Perhaps if we could trace these early descriptions and designations to their original sources we would know more about them, but that seems impossible at the present

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<sup>4</sup>Rupp's "History of Lancaster County," p. 243.

time. It is not improbable that both Hazard and Rupp during their searches among the State Archives found some document or authority from whence they drew their information. It is well known that many documents have been lost or stolen from the Archives, and there are still thousands that are now being carefully overhauled and bound, and this missing link may yet turn up. Until that time comes we will, no doubt, continue to wander among these uncertainties; for the present we have to leave the question as we found it.

### **Town Site Occupied Before Gibson's Time.**

The common belief is that Gibson was one of the earliest settlers, but the belief also prevails that he was not there long prior to the organization of the county, that is, in 1729. This latter view I do not believe tenable. Rupp says he kept tavern in 1722.

Gibson was undoubtedly himself a squatter. It can not have been otherwise, else his "Pasture" lot could not have been in the ownership of the Proprietaries, as the Commissioners reported, nor could Hamilton have offered it to the county for building purposes. The fact is, Gibson disappears as an innkeeper before 1729. His name is not one of the nine who were granted licenses at the August Quarter Sessions in that year. Indeed, he does not appear as a landholder until 1740. He was County Treasurer in 1730, and later a prominent member of St. James' Episcopal Church.

It must not be inferred that, because Lancaster was not laid out until 1730, there were no people living here before that time. Such a view is wholly erroneous. The Mennonites, as we know, made their first settlement on the Pequea in 1709, but

two years later they were followed by other settlers, who went westward beyond them, so that as early as 1712 there were already lands taken up on what later became Lancaster townstead. That was at least ten years before George Gibson and his Hickory Tree Tavern appear on the scene. Indeed, what use could there have been for a tavern but the accommodation of the traveling public, and that there was a traveling public as well as a stationary one to cater to I think can be satisfactorily shown. The evidence is overwhelming that as early as 1717-1718, not only on the lands of the site of Lancaster, but in the adjoining districts, on every side, there was a thrifty and prosperous agricultural population.

#### **No White Settlers Before 1700.**

It is a well-known fact that prior to the year 1700 no white men had settled within the territory now known as Lancaster county. There were Indian traders, however, who, under license from the Proprietary Government, had established trading posts at various points for traffic with the aborigines. It is sufficient for my purpose to name only a few of the earliest of these traders. The earliest were Canadian Frenchmen, who, from their acquaintance and relations to the Five Nations, gradually found their way as far south as Lancaster county, where some of them established their headquarters. Among these were Martin Chartiere, his son, Peter, a troublesome fellow, James Le Tort and Peter Bezallion. Later the Scotch-Irish took up this line of trade and some of the best known names in our history were engaged in it.

It was not until 1711 that we find the first official recognition of the planting of a colony of white men



within the present borders of Lancaster county. In June of that year, Governor Gookin and several members of the Assembly visited the Indians at Conestoga, and the Governor made the following brief address to the red men assembled, after having made them presents of powder, bullets and cloth: "Governor Penn upon all occasions is willing to show how great a regard he bears to you; he, therefore, has sent this small present (a forerunner of a greater one to come next spring) to you, and hath required me to acquaint you that he is about to settle some people upon the branches of the Potomac, and doubts not but the same mutual friendship which has all along as brothers passed betwixt the inhabitants of this Government and you, will also continue betwixt you and those he is about to settle; he intends to present fine belts of wampum to the Five Nations, and one to you of Conestoga, and requires your friendship to THE PALATINES SETTLED NEAR PEQUEA." To this the Indians made answer that they were well pleased with the Governor's speech, but were afraid if the people spoken of were settled near the Potomac, they would not be safe, as they would be between them (the Indians) and the Tuscaroras, with whom they were at war, and added, "As to the Palatines, they are, in their opinion, safely sealed."<sup>5</sup>

### **Settlements Rapidly Developed.**

From that time onward the settlement of Lancaster county progressed with great rapidity. I shall direct attention to the extent and the direction it took in order to show that when George Gibson and Lancaster town loomed up the county throughout the greater part of its extent was

<sup>5</sup>Colonial Records, vol. 2, p. 533.

dotted with the farms and homes of German, Scotch-Irish and Quaker settlers.

One Rudy Mayer squatted on what is probably the very ground where we are gathered to-night, as early as 1712, and he had a number of neighbors, Michael Shank, Jacob Imble, Jacob Hostetter, John Mayer and Henry Bare. Conestoga township was organized and had regularly appointed officials in the same year. As early as 1714 the tide of immigration, following up the eastern side of the Susquehanna, had reached the valley of the Chiquesalunga, and the Donegal Presbyterian congregation was organized in that year.<sup>6</sup> In 1715, the Rev. Mr. Gillespie, of Chester county, extended his pastoral labors as far westward as Paxtang, near Harrisburg. There was a burying ground there as early as 1716, showing that the frontier settlements had at that early period gone far beyond Lancaster.<sup>7</sup> East Donegal received its first settlers in 1716, and seventy heads of families were located there prior to the erection of the county in 1729.

Settlements were made in Earl township as early as 1717, and in the same years Lancaster township began filling up. In that year Peter Lemon had settled on the very land which now comprises the County Poorhouse farm. In the same year Dr. Neff, so far as known, our first regular physician, located in the county, and erected a mill. As early as 1717 as many as 5,000 acres of land had been applied for in, and immediately around, the site of Lancaster by German immigrants, and in that year Michael

<sup>6</sup>West's "Origin of Donegal and Carlisle Presbytery," quoted by Ziegler in his "History of Donegal Church," p. 9.

<sup>7</sup>Egle's "History of Paxtang Church," p. 5.

<sup>8</sup>Ellis & Evans' "History of Lancaster County," p. 905.

Shank, Theodorus Eby and others had patented large tracts of land on the town site.<sup>9</sup>

### Indians Become Alarmed.

So numerous had the settlers become that in 1718 Conestoga township was cut off from Chester county and erected into a township embracing all the portions west of the Octorara creek and along the eastern branches of the Conestoga. The list of the heads of families and single men is still to be seen in the Commissioners' office, and includes about 120 names. In the same year, on a petition of the inhabitants on and near the Conestoga, a road was laid out from that stream to Thomas Moore's and the Brandywine. At a conference held at the Conestoga Indian villages, with the Six Nations, in June, 1719, the chiefs of that noted delegation expressed dissatisfaction with the numerous settlements of whites made along the Susquehanna.<sup>10</sup>

Conrad Beissel and a few companions had erected their huts on Mill Creek, in the neighborhood of Bird-in-Hand, as early as 1721. Others were there still earlier, in 1719 and 1720. The Dunkers were all along that stream and the Cocalico in those years.

The heads of families in old Conestoga numbered 250 in 1724, indicating a population of perhaps 1,000 at that time, in that single district. By 1721 settlers had already crossed the Susquehanna and taken up lands in the territory claimed by Lord Baltimore, the proprietary of Maryland, and in 1722 the warrant for the survey of Springettsbury Manor, in York county, was issued—the largest of all the

<sup>9</sup>Ellis & Evans' History of Lancaster County, p. 360.

<sup>10</sup>Colonial Records, vol. 2, pp. 47-48.

Penn Manors. Proud, the early historian, tells us that "the settlements about the Indian villages of Conestoga were considerably advanced in improvements at this time (1720); the land thereabouts being exceedingly rich, and is now surrounded with divers fine plantations, or farms, where they raise quantities of wheat, barley, flax and hemp."<sup>11</sup>

### The London Land Company.

In fact, so numerous had the settlers become in the valley of the Conestoga and its tributaries at the time of the founding of Lancaster Town, and in many cases, I fear, without paying the slightest attention to the legal requirement of procuring land from the Proprietary Government, or any one else, that in 1730 the London Land Company, part of whose lands lay in this county, through its agent, Henry Hodge, Esq., on June 30, issued a hand-bill, which was widely distributed throughout the region where these lands lay, among the squatters who had located upon them without consulting or paying for the same to the company, warning them to leave within one month of the date of the notice. Application was at the same time made to the local Court to eject them from the lands on which they had settled. As no further action is recorded, it is likely that these people complied with the demands of the owners and made payment for the lands they had taken without first securing right and title by purchase."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Proud's "History of Pennsylvania," vol. 2, p. 128.

<sup>12</sup>The following is a copy of the circular alluded to above:

"Philadelphia, 20th of the 6th Month, 1730.

"WHEREAS divers PERSONS have (illegally) settled themselves and families on several Tracts of Land, known by the Name of the London Companys Land, and that to the Damage of the Owners thereof:

## A Large Population by 1729.

When, therefore, the act of May 10, 1729, was passed for the erection of the new county to be called Lancaster, there was already a large body of settlers around the little hamlet which was made the shiretown, and, perhaps, fifty families in the place itself. Nine years after the county was organized, the number of taxables in it was 2,560, indicating a population of perhaps 11,000. We shall, therefore, be not far from the mark if we put the population of the county at the period of its organization at about 11,000 souls. Another evidence of a numerous population at that period is the fact that at the May term of the Court in 1730, no fewer than thirty-six tavern licenses were granted.

Under the act passed for the erection of Lancaster county, four men, John Wright, Caleb Pierce, Thomas Edwards and James Mitchell, or any three of them, were empowered to purchase for the use of the county a convenient piece of land whereon to build a Court House and Prison, and they certified to Governor Gordon that they had done so, the land agreed upon for the purpose lying on or near a small run or water course between the plantations of Roody Mire, Michael Shank and Jacob Imble. This also shows that lands already occupied

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"THESE therefore to give Notice to all such Persons, that if they (within one Month after the Date hereof) shall refuse or neglect to make Satisfaction for the damages already done, and shall presume hereafter to cut any Timber-Trees or Underwood, etc., they may expect to be proceeded against according to a Law of this Province, made and provided in that Case.

"HENRY HODGE,  
"Attorney."

A fac-simile of the original appears in Sachse's "German Sectarians of Pennsylvania, 1708-1742," of which the above is a copy.

were selected to build the public buildings upon. The circumstance that further investigation brought to light, the fact that the title of the selected plot was still vested in the proprietary Government, and that the men who had settled upon it had not purchased it nor even located it by warrant, does not change the fact that the town site had been occupied years before there was any thought of locating the shire-town on this spot.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup>“At a meeting of the Provincial Council, held at Philadelphia, Feb’y. 19, 1729-30. The Governor (Gordon) acquainted the Board that, whereas, by the law Erecting Lancaster County, John Wright, Caleb Pierce, Thomas Edwards & James Mitchel, or any three of them are empowered to purchase for the use of the said County, a convenient piece of Land, to be approved of by the Governor, & thereon to build a Court House and Prison, and that now the said John Wright, Caleb Pierce & James Mitchel, have by a Certificat under their hands, signified that they have agreed upon a Lott of Land for the Uses aforesaid, lying on or near a small Run of Water, between the Plantation of Roody Mire, Michael Shank and Jacob Imble, about ten miles from the Sasquehannah River, and prayed his approbation of the same. The Governor therefore referr’d the matter to the Consideration of the Board, whether the Situation of the Place those Gentlemen had pitched on for a Town might be fitt to be confirmed, & that a Town should accordingly be fixed there. But the Question being asked to whom the land they had made choice of now belongs, & who has the Property of it, because it may be in such hands as will not part with it, or at least on reasonable terms for that use, & this not being known by any of the Board, it was deferr’d till such a time as that Point could be ascertained. But as it is presumed for anything that is yet known, to be un-surveyed Land, & that the Right is only in the Proprietor, It is the opinion of the Board that it is more to be granted by the Proprietor for such uses, than by any other Person.

“Mem. The Governor having understood that the Right of the Land pitched upon for the Townstead of Lancaster remains yet in the Proprietaries, was advised to approve of the Place agreed on by Messrs. Wright, Pearce & Mitchel, & the same was confirmed accordingly, by a Writing dated May 1st. 1730.”—Colonial Records, vol. 3, pp. 380-381.

## Population of Lancaster City.

There can be no more interesting subject connected with our local history than the population of Lancaster during the successive periods of its history from the time of its becoming the county seat until the period of the first national census in 1790. I have long tried to ascertain with some degree of accuracy what the figures really were. I have found eight estimates, made at six different periods by different individuals. All are guesses except the last, which was the first census, and, therefore, correct. Rupp says that the population at the time the town was laid out was 200. He does not say whence he derived his figures, or what degree of confidence should attach to them. It would indicate a village of about forty or fifty houses, and my own opinion is the guess or statement is reasonably correct. At the same time it confirms what I earlier said about there being a considerable population on the town-site long before George Gibson comes along. Long enough before 1729 hardy pioneers had pushed beyond, as I have shown, and Gibson had been supplying them with provent for man and beast years before. It was this very considerable migration passing into the western part of the county that called Gibson's tavern into existence. A country tavern, located on a high road where there is much travel, will naturally attract the unsettled portion of the community, and in that way a small town was gradually built up around the locality where all the travel between the Delaware and the Susquehanna passed.

It seems a very reasonable guess, therefore, that between 1720, or earlier, and 1730 this town of forty or fifty houses and 200 population had already been built when the town was laid out

in the latter years under the auspices of James Hamilton, who was the principal owner.<sup>14</sup>

Twelve years later, in 1742, the place was incorporated into a borough. No doubt it had grown very considerably since it became the county seat. That fact alone must have had a stimulating effect on the increase in population. Another cause, and perhaps the most potent one, was the easy terms on which building sites could be procured. The land could be had without the payment of a dollar in cash and subject to a ground rent only.

### Had Not the Gift of Prophecy.

One writer of that period tells us that this was a real injury to the borough because the growth was abnormal and not genuine. His words are as follows: "When Lancaster was laid out it was the desire of the proprietor to raise an annual revenue from the lots; no lots were, therefore, sold of any large amount, but settlers were encouraged to build and receive a lot, paying an annual sum as ground rent. Hence the large number of persons in indigent circumstances who were induced to settle in Lancaster. The Lancaster town was, therefore, too large (in area) at an early period in proportion to the population of the surrounding country and its inhabitants suffered much from a want of employment; as from its local situation, remote from water, it was not,  
**NOR COULD IT EVER POSSIBLY**

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<sup>14</sup>Two men were employed in the work of surveying the site of Lancaster-Town. The County Commissioners employed John Jones, who, according to Ellis & Evans' History of Lancaster County (page 360), completed his work in May, 1730. Hamilton had his tract surveyed by Roger Hunt, of Downingtown, who also built the first house in the town after it had been plotted. "Day's Historical Collections," p. 397.



BECOME, a place of business. The proprietor was, therefore, wrong in forcing the building and settlement of Lancaster. The town outgrew its strength and looks (in 1754) dull and gloomy in consequence."<sup>15</sup> That old writer has, no doubt, reflected the prevailing opinions of his time, but he lacked the power of casting his vision 150 years into the future. The Lancaster of to-day tells a different story. There is a statement, whence derived I know not, that at the period of incorporation into a borough the town had 300 houses. If we accept that estimate, then about twenty or more houses must have been built annually between 1730 and 1742, bringing the population up to about 1,300. There is every reason to believe, from all the circumstances bearing on the case, that the estimate is too high; 1,100 would probably be nearer the number.

Another authority, the Rev. Mr. Lock, an Episcopal minister, in 1746, reported the place as containing 300 houses. That would give us about 1,200 inhabitants, a very fair estimate, in my opinion.<sup>16</sup>

Our next authority on the population of the borough came along in 1754, in the person of Governor Thomas Pownall, of New Jersey, who in that year made a tour of the Province. He says in the journal which he kept: "Lancaster, growing town and making money—a manufactory here of saddles and pack-saddles, also of guns—it is a stage town—500 houses—two thousand inhabitants." Here is noted an increase of 200 in the number of houses and 800 in the num-

<sup>15</sup>An unknown writer quoted by Sherman Day in his "Historical Collections of the State of Pennsylvania," p. 398.

<sup>16</sup>Rev. Wilson Waters' "Sketch of St. James' Parish," p. 18.

ber of inhabitants during the twelve years since its incorporation and the year 1754. I am inclined to believe that estimate too high. Governor Pownall tells what he was told. The tendency then was, no doubt, the same as now: the people of every town show a disposition to exaggerate somewhat in the matters of population and progress. We magnify our municipal importance. Owing to many persons buying lots from the Hamilton estate in all parts of his tract, the houses were much scattered, and the place consequently appeared larger and more populous than it actually was. It is true, there may have been something resembling a boom between 1742 and 1754, but after weighing all the evidence I do not think the population in the latter year exceeded 1,800, and most probably did not reach that number.

It deserves to be noted that the character of the buildings at this period, and for a long time after, even down to 1800, was not of a high order. The houses were mostly built of wood, generally of logs and weather-boarded. A few were of stone. A man of eighty, writing in 1838, says that about the time of the Revolution or earlier one-story stone houses occupied the four corners of our Centre Square.<sup>17</sup>

The next estimate of Lancaster's population is by the Rev. Thomas Barton, pastor of the Episcopal Church. In 1764, just ten years after Governor Pownall's estimate, he states that the place had 600 houses, an increase of 100 in ten years. He does not hazard a guess at the number of inhabitants, but, allowing four to a house, as in the previous estimates, we get a population of 2,400. That, also, is too high, as we shall presently see in the light of more reliable fig-

<sup>17</sup>"Day's Historical Collections," p.396.

ures which will be presented. And yet Mr. Barton, who was an able and cultured man, should have been able to give us very nearly accurate figures on these points.

### The Taxables in 1771.

I find preserved in the State Archives at Harrisburg a list of the taxables in Lancaster borough for the year 1771. Their number was 511; that is, there was that number of persons in the town at that time who owned real estate of some kind. It is presumable that all, or nearly all, the real estate owners also had their own houses. If a few had not, their lack was, no doubt, compensated for by others who owned more than one house, so the balance may fairly be struck at the number of taxables, that is at 511. That would give us about 2,050 inhabitants at that time. Eight years later, in 1779, I find the number of taxables had increased to 556. That was in the very heart of the Revolutionary period, and would indicate a population of 2,224, and, I believe, may be taken as a fairly approximate estimate of the population at that time.

During the Revolutionary period no statements or estimates were made of the population, so far as is known. It was not until 1783-84 that we come to the first post-revolutionary statement.<sup>18</sup> It is by a German traveler, John David Schopf, who made a tour of the Middle States in those years and published an account of the same. He says: "Among the interior cities of all North America, Lancaster is the most important. Although hardly eighty

<sup>18</sup>The full title of this scarce book is: "Reise durch einige der mittlern und Sudlichen vereinigten nord-amerikanischen Staaten nach Ost-Florida und den Bahama-Inseln unternommen in den Jahren 1783 und 1784. Mit einem Lanchartchen. Erlangen: bey Johann Jacob Palm. 2 vols., 8 mo."

years old (it was only about sixty) it has already 900 houses." A foreigner, making a hurried tour through the country, was not likely to investigate for himself nor to secure accurate hearsay evidence. His estimate of 900 houses and of 3,600 inhabitants (allowing four to a house) is, therefore, far out of the way, as both the preceding and subsequent facts clearly show.

### **Lancaster's Bid for the National Capital.**

I come now to the last unofficial estimate I have been able to find. After the Revolution, as is well known, there was a vigorous contest among various towns to secure the National Capital. Among the rest, Wrightsville, on the Susquehanna, opposite Columbia, came near being successful. Lancaster also put in a bid. This latter fact was not known until a recent period. It turns up in an old document prepared by the prominent citizens of Lancaster borough in the year 1789, and now in possession of Mr. George Steinman, of this city. Accompanying the document was a map of the country lying immediately around Lancaster, embracing an area of ten square miles. The map was drawn by William Richenbach, an eminent mathematician and sometime professor of mathematics in Franklin College. The original map is in the possession of the Linnaean Society, of this city. The document itself is of great historical value, inasmuch as it gives, no doubt, accurately, many minute details relative to the borough and which are not to be found elsewhere. Fortunately, for our purposes, it states that an enumeration of the dwelling houses was actually made in 1786, "and the number then built was 678, which, since that period, has con-

siderably increased." The document further states that "according to the best computation we can make, there are within this borough about 4,200 souls." Now, if we allow the increase of houses alluded to to have been 20 per year between 1786, when their count was made, and 1789, when their address to Congress was written, we get 738 houses, and, allowing four and one-half persons to every house, we get a population of 3,321. When the first census of the country was made, that for 1790, but which was, perhaps, taken in the fall of the preceding year, the exact number of the inhabitants was found to be 3,373, instead of 4,200, as they had computed them to be in that year. And yet, they were not further from the true figures than most of those who had made their estimates in earlier years. In the foregoing calculations I have allowed for an increase of from 15 to 20 houses per year. That calculation should be qualified. It is hardly likely that the building operations were the same in every year or decade. There were periods of activity and periods of depression, no doubt, but in the end the situation evened up itself to something like the uniform rate allowed in these estimates. A general summary, therefore, presents the following figures, each, except the last, being allowed a small variation above or below the figures given:

#### ESTIMATED POPULATION AT VARIOUS PERIODS.

Year.		Houses.	Inhabitants.
1730	About	40 or 50	200
1742	About	275	1,100
1746	About	300	1,200
1754	About	400	1,600
1764	About	475	1,900
1771	About	511	2,044
1779	About	556	2,224
1783-4	About	650	2,600
1789-90	About	750	3,373
1800			5,405

Author: Diffenderffer, Frank Ried, 1833-1921.

Title: The early settlement and population of Lancaster county and city / by F. R. Diffenderffer, Litt.D.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): Lancaster County (Pa.)--Population.  
Lancaster (Pa.)--Population.

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society,  
1904/1905

Description: [151]-171 p. ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 9,  
no. 6

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.9

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

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