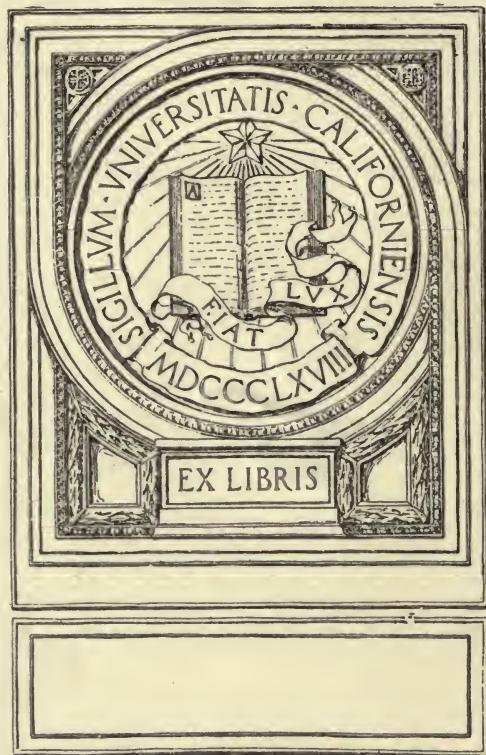


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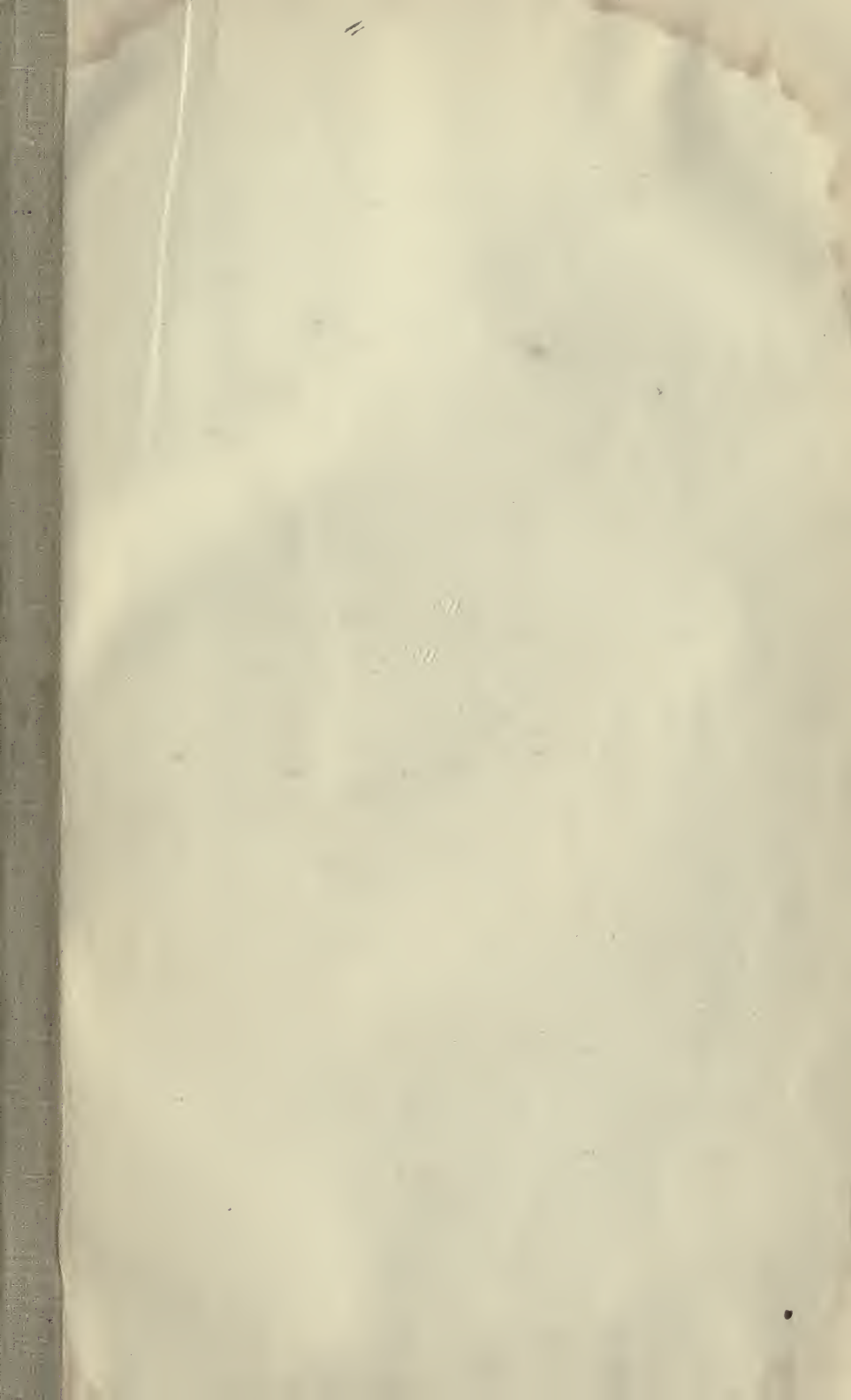


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PAPERS READ

BEFORE THE

LANCASTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 1919

"History herself, as seen in her own workshop."

LETTERS OF HON. JOHN STROHM
OUTLINE OF JOHN STROHM'S CAREER IN CON-
GRESS

MINUTES OF THE MARCH MEETING

VOL. XXIII. NO. 3.

PRICE TWENTY-FIVE CENTS PER COPY

LANCASTER, PA.

1919



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Letters of Honorable John Strohm.

I shall not attempt to disguise the pleasurable feelings that I entertain in being privileged to appear before this organization devoted to the achievements of this historic county. I claim a perfect right to feel at home here, for I am a true Lancaster Countian by ancestral proxy at least. No less than seven generations of my forbears sleep beneath your sod, and all my progenitors apparently had to live for some time at least in this county before they could feel qualified to take up abodes and successfully to pursue their vocations elsewhere.

It has been my good fortune to discover among the manuscripts in the Division of Public Records in the State Library numerous copies of letters by the Honorable John Strohm and yet more addressed to him when he was a member of the Legislature of Pennsylvania. Through the courtesy of Hon. John H. Landis of Millersville I am privileged also to make use of letters written to Mr. Landis' father, Jacob H. Landis, by Mr. Strohm while he was a representative in Congress from this district.

It is not my purpose to write a biography, but rather to summarize the contents of these letters in order to bring them to the attention of your society and make them available for the historians of your county. Yet a very few words on his political career are in order here. He was a member of the House of Representatives of Pennsylvania from Lancaster County from December 6, 1831, until the adjournment of the second session of the 44th House, April 15, 1834. His last term was the first term of Thaddeus Stevens, who then entered as a representative from Adams County.

Mr. Strohm became a member of the State Senate December 2, 1834. Here he met Charles B. Penrose, grandfather of the present U. S. Senator, who was serving his second term. December 4, 1838 he began his second term in the State Senate, this time as a representative of Lancaster and York Counties. In January, 1842, he was elected Speaker of the Senate.

Of Mr. Strohm's connection with "The Buckshot War" I quote the following from Col. A. K. McClure's "Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania," Vol. 1, page 54.

"The appearance of the military had little effect. as the mob was discreetly careful to avoid conflict with the troops. With the mob practically controlling the legislative halls inside, and the militia keeping peace outside, the house kept up the farcical contest between the two speakers until, after a considerable period of disorder, Senator John Strohm, of Lancaster, an Anti-Mason of high character and intelligence, deserted his party and gave the casting vote in favor of recognizing the Hopkins house.

"That practically ended the controversy, as when an Anti-Masonic senate had recognized a Democratic house there was no longer any basis for con-

tinuing the contest. Strohm was bitterly denounced for what was regarded as an act of apostacy, but he lived long enough to be generally and earnestly commended by all good citizens of every political faith for having had the courage to be honest, at the expense of party favor, in the severest crisis that ever confronted the State. Stevens moved to Lancaster some years thereafter and I remember seeing him there in 1851 when I was a delegate to the Whig State convention, and aided in nominating John Strohm as the Whig candidate for canal commissioner. I met Stevens soon after the convention adjourned, and asked him how he regarded the nomination of Strohm. He answered in his curt, grim way: 'He's our candidate now and I forgive him.' He was in Congress during the Mexican War, and one of the thirteen Whigs of the body who had the courage to vote against an appropriation to the army in Mexico because the act began by declaring that 'we are at war by the act of Mexico.' The Whigs moved to strike the offensive, and as they believed untrue, statement from the bill, but were defeated by a party vote, and when they had to meet the question of voting for the bill containing the false statement of historical facts, or vote against appropriating money for the army, all but thirteen supported the measure, but John Strohm believed it to be untrue, and he resolutely voted against the bill. He lived to a ripe old age, and died universally beloved by his people."

Mr. Strohm was a member of Congress from 1845 to 1849.

This collection consists of apparently accurate copies of private letters written by Mr. Strohm to his cousins, John, Henry, and Emanuel Herr in Niagara County, near Buffalo, New York, while the writer was a teacher and farmer; of private letters written by his cousin Isaac Strohm; of numerous letters written by his constituents and friends and the original letters written by him to Mr. Jacob H. Landis, already referred to.

The first of these letters is dated September 27, 1816, and is addressed to

"COUSIN JOHN HERR,
 "NR. WILLIAMSVILLE,
 Niagara County, N. Y.

"We are all in good health except Hetty. . . . I have commenced teaching school again, where I taught before, and intend to continue it until May and then if God spares me health and strength, I propose making a visit to you and enjoy a repetition of those hours which have been so agreeably passed in your company, and of which the bare recollection is capable of raising pleasing emotions."

TO JOHN HERR, JANUARY 26, 1817.

"Received yours of October 24 by the hand of Abraham Graff. Christian Bear died December 16th. Andrew McLaughlin died Tuesday in consequence of a wagon running over him the evening before.

"Uncle David Herr is to move in the Spring from John Neffs to Michael Barr's Mill which he has rented for three years at \$500 per annum."

He then gives prices as follows:

"Wheat \$2.50 at home and \$3.00 at Wilmington.

“ Rye—1.30

“ Corn—1.12½

“ (Considerable quantities are purchased by Millers from the lower end of the County and from State of Maryland where a report says the hard hand of famine already presses hard on the poor.) There is a report here that John Herr and his friends had like to have been put to trouble when they were out there, in fact that they had precipitately to leave the country in order to escape going to prison, they deny it and I am disposed to believe them, but expect the truth from you.”

JOHN STROHM TO COUSIN HENRY HERR, MARCH 30, 1817.

“ Uncle Jacob Witmer and his family intend to start for Ohio in about six weeks.

“ John Haines has been at Philadelphia and got the Polypus in his nose extracted.”

In this letter he also expresses his satisfaction that the report regarding John Herr is unfounded.

TO COUSIN EMANUEL HERR, SEPTEMBER 28, 1817.

Announces the death of his sister Hetty which occurred while on his trip to New York City.

TO COUSIN EMANUEL HERR, NOVEMBER 24, 1817.

“ Our election is over and Wm. Findlay is Governor by between 4 and 5,000 of a majority. The Federalists were completely successful in our country. Jasper Slaymaker, John Forry, Hugh Martin, Emanuel Reigart, Henry Ham-bright and Joel Lightner are our assemblymen and Wm. B. Ross is Commissioner. Parties never ran so high in this state before and should this infernal spirit continue to rise in the same proportion for twenty years to come as it has the last ten years God only knows what the consequence will be.”

TO EMANUEL HERR, DECEMBER 26, 1817.

. . . “ I am now happy to inform you that on tuesday last I gave my hand to one who has long been my Mistress of my heart and that is Susanna Bear, daughter of John Herr. In her, I expect to find a cheerful companion, a sincere friend, and an affectionate wife with whom I intend to tread the mazy round of life in harmony and love.”

TO HENRY HERR, JUNE 3, 1818.

“ I live in a house formally occupied by Joseph Mooney where we had the debating school once.”

TO EMANUEL HERR, OCTOBER 3, 1819.

“ Cousin John Witmer is teaching school at the new sandstone school house. . . . Land is 50% lower than some years ago. Grain is very low. Wheat a dollar a bushel, Rye 60 cents and Corn 50.

“ Address your letters to Lampeter Square as there is a post office there now.”

On December, 1820, he reports hard times, wheat being 70 cts., corn 35 cts., rye 50 cts., oats 25 cts. and on April 1, 1821, he writes that "he has quit teaching and commenced farming on the place where Jacob Herr formally lived. Wheat sells between 55 and 60 cents per bushel, rye 26 to 28, corn 37½ to 40 cents, oats 20 to 22 per bushel. I bought some at 20."

TO COUSIN EMANUEL HERR, SEPTEMBER 20, 1821.

"There are many sick people in our neighborhood particularly along Big Beaver Creek. In almost every house about the Black Horse there are two or three that have got the Ague. In Christian Schultz's there are no less than six."

He then refers to the Internal Improvements projected by the Legislature. He speaks of the Union canal connecting Susquehanna with the Delaware, but says that "an improvement of greater utility has lately been made by some of our enterprising citizens. Mr Jacob Strickler, of Columbia, has constructed a boat with sails, which is to sail regularly from Middletown, Marrietta and Columbia to Port Deposit. She is called the Lady Lightfoot and has made several trips taking down about 130 bbls. of Flour, and at one time returned with 6½ tons of Plaster, 17 bbls. Herrings, 9 bbls, shad and 1½ tons groceries. Although the water is low, she passes up and down with ease and safety. She made a trip in about 5 days. There are several other such boats built or building at Columbia and Marrietta some of which will carry from 350 to 400 bbls. of Flour. It is calculated that the craft now prepared at Columbia Marrietta etc. will carry 1200 bbls to the head of tide weekly and in high water from 1700 to 2000."

In a letter of January 2, 1825, to Emanuel Herr he gives a large list of bankrupt farmers, and on the 30th of April he says: "John Herr's society is increasing very fast. There were 21 persons baptized last Sunday and there are a number of others that have made application."

TO EMANUEL HERR, AUGUST, 1827.

"John Neff, Sr., with Francis Kendig Sr. and John Herr' brother-in-law went to Ohio on a visit.

"The Morgan affair is quite probably an electioneering scheme."

TO EMANUEL HERR, MAY 3, 1828.

"Is there any truth in the rumor that Morgan was discovered in Asia Minor in the garb of a Turk and that he has embraced the faith of Mahomet."

He differs with his cousin Emanuel in politics, slightly favors Jackson, and predicts that the latter will carry Pennsylvania and New York.

The letters of Isaac Strohm, Senator Strohm's cousin, a few of which are written from Lancaster County and the remainder from Ohio where he taught school and clerked in a store show unusual ability and discriminating political foresight. Isaac is frank and does not hesitate to differ with his more famous cousin. It is to be regretted that the limits of this paper compel too brief an account of this correspondence.

FROM ISAAC STROHM, LAMPETER, FEBRUARY 16, 1833.

This letter expresses difference of opinion with reference to the admission of negroes into the State "We should pass laws prohibiting them from coming into our state."

As regards the bill authorizing the Governor to purchase 53 copies of Hazard's Register, "I agree that it is mocking the farmers and wasting the publick money. It put me in mind of blowing Buchanans bellows all day. A farmer would be at some *hazard* to get the reading of it when he wanted it and I very much doubt if the gentleman who got up the bill has not *hazarded* his popularity."

Isaac Strohm writes (Dec. 13, 1833):

"Buchanan might as well have staid at St Petersburg and better would it have been for our State if McKean had never been born.

"Rush lights it seems, are not valued more than farthing candles. I dont think this is altogether clever. Let me know how the whole team of Anti-Masonry pulls."

FROM ISAAC STROHM, LAMPETER, MARCH 25, 1835.

"On resuming my pen, I will let you know that I saw Daniel Webster too, but had no introduction to him. I was at Mr. Coopers on Saturday last. and seen him stepping in. On shaking hands with Mr. Cooper, he took of his hat, and displayed a forehead that would bear a phrenological examination.

"So you fellows in the Senate have repealed the School Law. I showed your letter to David, and after reading it till where you expressed a hope that the House would agree to the repeal, he threw it away and would not read another word of it, I state this at his request. Benjamin Herr was with us to day. He says he will write to Stevens—He is of the opinion, that with the aid of Mr. Stevens' talents the School Bill will be saved. If I may express a hope on the subject, it is, that it would undergo some necessary alterations, and have a longer trial. The Strasburgers' are not yet over their scrape, as you will see by their motions. A pretty cute trick of Mr. T. B. Burrows to screen his sentiments under the skirts of a public meeting. But, as the address of said meeting says 'rumour is my authority' I expect a real grid-iron review of these proceedings in the newspapers, by Ellick over his proper signature. If that happens—Wo! be to 'Lord Darby.'"

FROM ISAAC STROHM, ROSSVILLE, OHIO, JUNE 26, 1836.

"I perceive that you have been 'Gerrymandering' in the Legislature, and taking steps to secure a majority of your faith in both branches. If all is fair in politicks, it may do well enough. So that you beat Van Buren (which I think you can) no odds for the means. I begin to entertain hopes of the Gen's success. This State will go for him. Such is the opinion of our knowing ones, amongst others, Ex. Gov. Morrow. This county is the stronghold, but many original Jackson men will not go for 'heir apparent.' Indeed I rarely meet with an intelligent man that is any ways decent that is in favor of the Jackson dynasty. Perhaps the expression smacks a little of Aristocracy, but I venture to say that if Van is elected it will be by the 'tag rag and bottail' of society."

LETTER OF ISAAC STROHM, MAD RIVER, GREEN COUNTY, OHIO, APRIL 15, 1837.

"I remained a couple of days in Dayton where I saw many old acquaintances and had introductions to several new ones—among which was the Hon. Thos. Corwin of Lebanon, who was at Dayton on business. He is a fine looking fellow, and in general appearance resembles Atty Baldwin of Lampeter."

LETTER OF ISAAC STROHM, DECEMBER 31, 1837.

"Governor Ritner's message I gave a hasty perusal. I would not give a fig for his abolition on notes under 10 dollars. Our country would not have got along half so well had it not been for small bills. That part of Ritners relative to Common Schools I opine is from the pen of the *Supe* himself. My dander always begins to rise when I hear and see laudatory things said of Tom on account of his friendship to common schools and Education. After opposing the system as he and Lord Darby have done—then pretend love for education comes with an ill grace from them."

FROM ISAAC STROHM, OHIO, JULY 22, 1838.

"Politics are looking up" Vance will be re-elected. Tom Ewings seat in the U. S. Senate will be secured and whether Harrison, Clay or Webster is the Presidential candidate this state goes the right way. The old General is travelling for 'effects' eating dinners, etc., a bad business. There is much noise about him in some portions of the state, as much, I believe, out of courtesy for him as from a sincere desire that he will be nominated for I really think Clay has more friends than he. I am inclined to think the latter will be the man, even if we must elect him without Pennsylvania."

FROM ISAAC STROHM, SEPTEMBER 16, '38.

"I am pleased to see your name on the ticket for re-election to the Senate. Benjamin Herr informed me that Reigart was to be your competitor in Convention, but I saw by the Examiner that he was cute enough to decline when he saw the complexion of the delegation.

"It appears that John A. Schulze figures as a Ritner man. No matter. His influence will be little anyway. I did not like the man when I was a boy and have seen little yet that would induce me to change my opinion."

ISAAC STROHM WRITES FROM BATHPORT, NEAR FAIRFIELD, GREENE Co., OHIO,
OCTOBER 27, 1838.

"The great struggle is over and we as you doubtless know, as well as you Pennsylvanians have been beaten by a talented young gentleman—You by a moral and political rascal—else the truth telling anti-mason papers lie.

"And do you not blush to see the circular issued by Thos. Henry Burrows. Is he writhing under the sentence passed upon him that with Ritner he must wheel and file off.

"I had hoped to see the Examiner change its *allfired* character after the election, but it appears the hobby (excuse me) of anti-masonry must be mounted again."

Interesting are the letters received by Mr. Strohm from his sons.

The first of these bears date, March 20, 1835. It is from Henry and conveys the information that "Henry Herr says he will come to Lancaster on the first day of April and that you might come along with him out if you choose. He said he would take the dearborne along. Henry Lyner sowed the clover seed this week."

On March 16, 1837, his son John wrote:

"The master quit keeping school on teasday (Tuesday) I went around the fences and shut them up wherever they needed it. I expect we must pick stones now. Our pigs are getting prettier every day. Henry was at home on Sunday, and he is coming on very well."

His son Henry writes, January 28, 1838, that he likes his trade and place very much.

On the second of February, 1838, his daughter Mary writes a brief letter referring chiefly to the weather and the prevalent illness.

On the tenth of February, 1838, John, Jr., gives the information regarding butchering and the school and the rapid disappearance of the hay and fodder; that "Christly Schulze has got the mare yet and I am very glad of it," that "Emanuel is going to school until the first of March."

DECEMBER 9, 1833.

Wm. M. Baxter urges support of charter for Elizabethtown, and thanks him, December 20, for presenting it.

Wm. Heister writes from Washington, December 10, 1833:

He regrets that Rush could not unite Anti-Masonic Vote. Gen. McKean was elected. "Rush should not have volunteered his sentiments of approbation to the Executive on the occasion of the removal of the deposits of the bank controversy."

Heister further says: "We shall be likely to have a great deal of talk on the subject of the removal of the deposits, but in my judgment it will all end in talk, inasmuch as according to the orthodox creed of the dominant party, the Executive can do no wrong and must be sustained at all hazards and under all circumstances."

Samuel Wagner writes December 12, 1833:

"I am told there is considerable warmth among the citizens of the North-eastern part of the county who resides within the section intended to be embraced in the proposed new county."

DECEMBER 12, 1833.

Richd E. Cochran of Columbia writes on behalf of the African Methodist Episcopal Church of Columbia asking for incorporation of that body.

MARCH 21, 1834.

David Herr writes: "I wish you would try if possible to come home for we need you badly. We wish to have Benjamins Seven acres measured of so that we could get the fencing done before the corn is planted, and we want you to make the survey."

DECEMBER 6, 1835.

He writes from Strasbury that "the Anti-Masonic party in the county of Lancaster will feel much aggrieved if his Exelency will appoint Thomas H. Borrows as Secretary of State."

"COLUMBIA March 31 1835

"JOHN STROHM ESQU

"*Dear Sir*

"I take the liberty of introducing to you acquainten Mr Joseph Cothell of this place who visits your town for the purpose of getting some acts passed relative to our road from Marietta to Middletown any assistanc you can give him to further his object I will take as a particular favor.

"I am respectfully yours

"C HALDERMAN"

"LANCASTER July 20, 1836

"AMOS ELLMAKER to JOHN STROHM Esq.

"*Des*

"*Col:* Pleasonton is one of a committee appointed by the military of Philadelphia to petition the legislature for some law relative to the organization of volunteers—

"Permit me to introduce him to you. He graduated at West Point military academy some years ago—and is now a practising atty. in Phila. He is a gentleman of fine talents and excellent education—amiable and honorable in the highest degree—

"I am respectfully

"your obd svt

"AMOS ELLMAKER."

DECEMBER 17, 1836.

Soln. Diller refers to the resolutions of a meeting held at Blue Ball's relative to the formation of a new county to be formed of parts of Lancaster, Chester and Berks and enclosing a copy of Lancaster Examiner containing the meetings proceedings.

"EPHRATA March 25, 1838.

"*Dear Sir:*

"Feeling much interested in the education of the rising generation and the establishment of a general school system I take the liberty of addressing you on the subject, though I have not a child nor kin to be benefitted by it. And as my family have all had their education and neither of them married, what I shall say cannot be imputed to interested motives.

"The 'School System' has always been defeated in this district, by the arbitrary and overawing measures of the rich avaricious landholders, who are too ignorant to see the benefits of the provision of the 'School Law' and too selfish to allow the power class the advantages it affords.

“One instance will afford a general view of the state of things in this township. One of my neighbors, a very wealthy man, a short time before the election, put up advertisements to excite the prejudices of the property holders, and produced an enactment which made all their poor tenants, who are dependent upon the landlord, (though they have many children whom they are not able to give an education) to go to the polls against their wishes and vote against the means to have their children educated or be cast out of their places.

“Disgraceful as is such conduct, much more disgraceful proceedings have been openly practiced. This class of people have managed to get into the office of holding the elections; and at our last election, on 16th inst. the officers holding the election refused to be qualified, as the law required, and consequently could dispose of the votes as they pleased. The result was a ‘beggarly account’ for the School System—making it appear that nearly three to one was cast against it—while the year before it was lost only by six or eight votes.

“Under these circumstances there is not any prospect of having justice done to the ‘System’ or to the poor children and my object in addressing you is to see if some other plan cannot be devised to secure the present appropriations due to the township (Cocalico) to the poor who are thus arbitrarily deprived of it.

“Could not a provision be introduced to accomplish this object. Either a general amendment or a special one for this turnpike,—to appropriate the sum now due, and according, to the education of the children of non-freeholders; to be paid through the commissioners; for it would not be considered safe to place the money in the hands of men, the ‘school men’ who have publicly manifested such a wanton disregard of duty and justice in having themselves elected into office, by such foul means, to keep down the poor.

“BENJ. KONIGMACHER.”

“MARTIC TOWNSHIP LANCR. CO. NEAR
NEW PROVIDENCE April 11th 1843.

“HON. CHARLES B. PENROSE.

“*My Dear Sir:*

“As Congress is not now in session I trust that your official duties are so far diminished as to allow you a little relaxation, and perhaps give you leisure to attend to private correspondence without neglecting more important business. In your last letter to me, (dated Dec. 5th, 1842) you stated that the present Administration was inclined to regard party conflicts with indifference, and to look more for patriotism and less for party success. Judging from some circumstances that have transpired since that time I feel disposed to think that you were correct at least as far as relates to party success; for it seems to me that John Tyler is perfectly indifferent as to what party obtains the ascendancy, provided he can succeed in being re-elected. His recent appointments and nominations to office, comprise not only men from each of the two great parties into which the people of the United States are divided but evince a disposition to keep fair weather with the different

clans and factions into which those parties, are subdivided. To be in favor of Cap. Calhoun, Van Buren, Buchanon, or Scott constitutes no serious objection to the dispensation of his favors but to manifest a partiality for Henry Clay is an offence that cannot be overlooked or forgiven. If I am wrong in this, upon what grounds have Jonathan Roberts, Thomas Sr. Smith, Solomon Van Ranslear and a number of others been removed, and violent Loco focos though preferring different candidates for presidents appointed in this plan. Notwithstanding all the liberal professions made by his Excellency, his attachment to patriotism and merit more than to party success, there appears to be more persecution for opinions sake, under the present administration than was ever experienced under any former one. Such at least are my impressions, and such seems to be the general opinion. It is true, I may have been led into error in some particulars, as the testimony I receive is all on one side, for I never see a paper, or meet with an individual who will undertake to defend John Tyler's Course or Conduct. Some of the Democrats (alias Locofocos) approve of some of his actions, yet I have conversed with no one who was willing to vote for him, on the contrary, I have met with several, who say that, if Buchanan is not the Candidate of their party, they will vote for Henry Clay.

"In your last, you were pleased to advert to the different views and feelings with which you now contemplate the scenes of excitement and party strife thro which you and I have witnessed and in which we participated, compared with the emotions which animated your bosom at the time those scenes were passing. May I take the liberty to ask whether the opinion you once entertained of James M Porter is among those which now seem to have been greatly exaggerated? And whether your prejudices and prepossession in regard to his conduct as president Judge of the the Court of Quarter Sessions of Dauphin County in 1839 have become so 'modified and mellowed down' as to enable you to approve of his appointment to the elevated station which he now holds. For my own part, although I could not approve of Mr Porter even in many things, and particularly on the occasion above referred to, yet I always felt a friendly feeling towards him and had given him credit for a considerable degree of talent and ability and if we must have a Locofoco in the Cabinet from Pennsylvania I am as well content that he should enjoy the honour as any other of the party.

"We have a great many rumours about changes and appointments at Washington one half of which I suppose are the mere conjectures of persons, who have no means of obtaining accurate information on the subject. It gives me pleasure however to observe that amongst the numerous changes spoken of, even Madam Rumour, with all the license usually accorded to her invention fang, has not hinted at a change in the Solicitors office.

"I would like very much to have your opinion in regard to who you think will be the candidate of the so called Democratic party for president.

"With my best wishes for your welfare I remain

"Your humble Servant

"JOHN STROHM."

LANCASTER March 22d 1837.

"MR. STROHM

"Sir:

"We the undersigned Committee appointed on behalf of the 'Mechanics Society,' to address you, requesting your aid and influence in striving to procure for our Institute a small Legislative Appropriation. To enable us to establish it on a more permanent basis, and to enlarge its sphere of usefulness.

"Our reasons for applying more particularly at this period, is the recent notice we have seen, that the Phila. and Pittsburgh, Institutes are each about receiving liberal appropriations.

"The Society was established in 1829 solely by the Mechanics of Lanc., for the purpose of founding a Library and School, for Apprentices, the former now contains about 1400 Vols, and the latter owing to the want of funds, we were unable to put in operation untill the present winter, when we obtained the services of several Philanthropic gentlemen, who have taught, and delivered Lectures gratuitously.

"This Institution like many others ere this have dwindled into insignificance, but the unwearied efforts of a few disinterested individuals, who have spared neither time or money, has gradually, though unobtrusively become of some consequence to our City. A large number of Apprentices, have weekly access to the Library gratuitously, and an equal number have had an opportunity of attending an evening School, in which all the branches of a first rate Education were taught, and a Lecture delivered weekly, which we have no doubt will be attended by the most beneficial effects.

"H. C. LOCHER,
"HENRY PINKERTON,

"PETER M CONOMY,
"LOUIS C. JUNGERICH,
"HENRY E. LEMAN."

LANCASTER, April 6, 1838.

"Gentlemen—The undersigned, a deputation from the Mechanics' Society of the City and County of Lancaster, have been appointed to ask, at your hands, Some determined effort toward the obtainment of the long-solicited appropriation to that body. We shall not urge our wants—Since the most undeserving might plead the same. We humbly inquire, 'Are we not deserving? Have we not battled long and steadily against adversity, and finally established ourselves upon a footing where benefit and satisfaction to ourselves were the unavoidable result, as well as to community at large? If we are not worthy reject our petition: But if, in our object, you observe aught of that great principle of Educational policy which the State has taken under its especial charge. If you see how anxious we are and long have been to perfect some code of instruction to the young. If you can see how much Society is indebted to voluntary exertions. If you know the benign results of good deeds, take us, we entreat you, under the broad wing of general legislation.'

We appeal to you late; but, 'better late than never'. We ask you on the

brink of adjournment; but we are confident you will reflect how much can be done in a little time.

“ JOHN STROHM

Esquires

“ JAS. A. CALDWELL

Senate

“ PETER M CONOMY

“ JOHN W. FORNEY

“ PETER G. EBERMAN

“ DANIEL RHOADS

“ CHARLES GILLESPIE

“ HENRY PINKERTON

“ JACOB MCHARMONY

“ ELI. J. PARRY

“ DAVID A. DONNELLY

“ CN PEIEFFER ”

TO JACOB H. LANDIS, APRIL 28, 1846.

“The Oregon Question has been disposed of. Appearance of Public Grounds much better than when you were here. But this applies only to the Public Grounds. In this neighborhood none of the luxuriant wheat fields, and richly blooming clover fields of which every where greets the eye of the traveller in our native county.”

TO JACOB H. LANDIS, MAY 16, 1846.

“Occupied very little time in passing the important war measure we have been consuming much time in unimportant discussion.

“It is calculated of some who have an opportunity of knowing the facts that the whole expenditures of the Government at this time is not much short of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars per day.”

TO JACOB H. LANDIS, AUGUST 5, 1846.

Pays his respects to the Loco foco tariff and longs for the time when he can return to Lancaster County.

TO JACOB H. LANDIS, FEBRUARY 15, 1847.

“Whilst I am writing we are taking the vote on the Slavery question. The Wilmot proviso has ben inserted in Committee of the whole. I like to see this. I think it will do much towards bringing about a peace, for if the Southern men find that they cannot have an acquisition of Slave territory they will all be against a further prosecution of the war.”

TO JACOB H. LANDIS, FEBRUARY, 1848.

“The efforts to make a turnpike road from Lancaster to Millersville is worthy of encouragement.”

He then condemns the new Tariff, predicts that the war will last another year and concludes his discussion of natural issues as follows: “I hope the eyes of the people will be opened to some extent, so as to enable us to elect a Whig President, and then the current of things will be changed, though it will take a long time for the Country to recover from the injuries inflicted by the Administration of James K. Polk.

“The Presidential question begins to be agitated a good deal here. The Taylor men are very sanguine. For my part I don't like General Taylor as a candidate, but if he is settled we shall have to put up with it.”

TO JACOB H. LANDIS, JUNE 3, 1848.

“A few days ago I made a report on Mr. Secretary Walker's report on the finances which excited a great commotion in the Loco foco ranks. They kicked and floundered a good deal and accused me of unfairness towards the Secretary.

“It seemed to touch a tender spot. The Secretary prides himself on his knowledge of figures and his accuracy of calculation, and to find his sublime calculations commented on, and criticized by a Pennsylvania farmer and a dutchman at that, seems to worry him and his friends very much.”

He then reviews the pre-convention situation in the Whig party and predicts the nomination of General Taylor.

Let us give you a single attempt at poetry. One of Strohm's letters to New York closes with these lines :

“After plowing all day I write this by candle light,
Having no more to say I bid you my friend good night,
May the blessings of heaven attend you always
May peace and contentment be yours all your days,
When o'er life's path you may cheerfully roam
And enjoy the best wishes of your old friend

“JOHN STROHM.”

Outline of John Strohm's Career in Congress

From the beginning Congressman Strohm's career was marked by a deep concern for internal improvements in the country. He gave his attention early, to the development of the Columbus and Sandusky Turnpike which the company was to build and extend in consideration of 49 sections of public land given to them as an inducement to make the improvement (Cong. Globe, Vol. 15, pp. 83 and 279).

He was also interested in having a canal built on the Ohio River to avoid the falls of Louisville (p. 352).

He was very careful to insist that improvements must not be partially distributed, and that they must be given to the whole country. At first he held there could be no improvements provided for under the constitution except they promote general welfare.

He was greatly concerned about the protective tariff of 1842; and labored for a provision in the improvement grants, that if the tariff were repealed none of the money allotted for improvements should be spent (p. 523).

He labored for the passage of a bill for the relief of Robert Fulton's heirs (pp. 1115 and 6).

His most notable service was for the preservation of the high tariff of 1842. Sir Robert Walker's views on tariff were gaining ground as a result of England's reduction of tariffs inspired by him, and it was being urged that we should gain a great foreign market if we lowered our tariff. The proposed Walker tariff was introduced in 1846, as a successor of the tariff of 1842, and it was enacted with dire results ending in the panic of 1857.

Strohm's arguments in favor of the high tariff of 1842 and against the proposed low tariff of 1846 are to be found in Globe, 15, p. 1027, and in Vol. 16, p. 981, the Appendix. He argued:

1. This is the first time in our history that we reverse our policy of fostering industries and turn to destroying them.
2. That only a revenue tariff is constitutional is an idea long abandoned—our revenue tariffs hurt business and did not produce revenue—destructive.
3. This is the first time discriminating duties are to be used to destroy—not to help.
4. The proposed tariff will prostrate domestic manufacture.
5. It will cause a loss of millions of invested capital.
6. It will not give the farmer an advanced price for grain in England, though the corn laws of England be repealed because we are too far from her market—nearer ones get it.
7. The laborer is cut off from his labor and we will pay an increased price for foodstuffs.

8. Farmers will lose hauling for forges and furnaces, as they will be closed—and will lose these people as customers.

9. The only persons who will profit will be importers.

But the protective system :

1. Promotes resources.

2. By thus promoting, our growth in strength will be our defense instead of standing armies.

3. Our country will be made thereby one of true independence, as we can develop and live without other nations.

4. We will prosper and enable the states to pay their debts to foreign nations held largely against them—and thus establish our credit.

5. Our resources thus established can and ought to be used to build improvements in peace beneficial to our citizens, and to make a happy people.

6. Thus we will extend commercial relations to all sections of our vast country and bind them together and overcome the jealousies of sections still existing.

7. We will get macadamized roads, railroads, canals, harbors and bridges, etc. These will serve well in war to transport troops, munitions, ordnance, stores, etc., in our war with Mexico and other nations if any.

8. We can get these only by rejecting the proposed tariff (1846).

9. Our past shows we were prosperous always under protective tariffs.

10. The condition of the country five years before the tariff of 1842 was enacted (1837) was most deplorable.

Answer to the South :

1. Every article the South purchases has been cheapened by the protective tariff.

2. But if not, "Are they not willing to undergo inconvenience to establish a true independence of their country?"

"My district is agricultural—and raises more agricultural products than any other county in the United States, yet we want the manufacturers to succeed in that district and everywhere."

3. "We are now in war, and must have a tariff that will meet the needs of business—but revenue tariffs meet the needs of the treasury only and change as the treasury's needs changed, not as business and growth need."

These arguments seem odd and worn out to us, but they were novel then. Our country looked bigger to them then than the world looks to us now. There was no need in Strohm's mind to concern ourselves about foreign countries as we had no possible need of them. To establish a "true independence" by making ourselves prosperous and self sufficient was his great idea—perhaps it was the idea at the base of the protective system. His position that "true independence" consisted in being able to ignore the other nations of the world is novel even to us. His thought that a tariff should be used to "develop our strength and resources" so as to make us powerful in war and to compensate for the lack of standing armies, was very enticing. His "internal improvements" to enable us to mobilize, is a provident view and worthy of a great statesman.

From 1847 onward, Strohm presented many petitions for the abolition of slavery. These first came from Quakers in Lancaster County and elsewhere. He was active in trying to clean slavery out of the District of Columbia (Globe).

He took the view that our armies should withdraw from Mexico and that a commission should go there instead, to negotiate peace. But the army was to be kept close by on our border. He saw that it was a "Politicians' War."

He was on the committee on public expenditures, and I think chairman, and took his committee into a thorough investigation of the accounts of the Secretary of the Treasury and reported a discrepancy of \$1,400,000. This was a matter as big as the aeroplane discrepancies of our day.

He made a speech on this subject before the House, January 21, 1848, in Committee of the Whole. This was his second big effort (Vol. 18, p. 466).

His last recorded acts were petitions to abolish slavery and to admit no new states except on the provision that slavery be excluded in them. Many of the petitions on this subject were from Lancaster County.

Being followed by Stevens, his record seems quite diminutive, compared with the acts of that great statesman.

The Society's Honor Roll Men in National Service.

Theodore W. Scott, Lancaster, Pa., pharmacist in the U. S. Navy, was 15 years in the Medical Department. He entered the service in May, 1896, and was retired on account of physical disability in July, 1911. He served on many ships and fitted up U. S. Hospital Ship "Solace." Seven and one half years of his service was spent on the seas and he four times circled the globe. The day after war was declared upon Germany he volunteered for service, went to Brooklyn, where he had been employed previously for two years, and was given charge of the drugs sent all over the world. His health broke and he was ordered home on June 1. He died August 4, 1917.

Capt. Sanderson Detwiler, Columbia, Pa., enlisted in old Co. C of Columbia. Now in the 28th Division in France. Is at present Adjutant of the 103d Trains, Military Police, of 4th Regiment.

Harry B. Hostetter, Lancaster, Pa. Enlisted at Independence Hall, Philadelphia, May 16, 1917. Was called into the Naval Reserve force at Sewells Point, Cape May, June 4, 1917. Was transferred to the University of Pennsylvania, at Philadelphia, June 19, 1918, where he entered the "Officers Material School." On October 8, 1918, he was commissioned an Ensign, and was stationed on the battleship "Indiana." Was released from service Feb. 7, 1919.

First Lieutenant E. J. Stein, Lancaster, Pa., enlisted in the Medical Corps and sailed for Europe last November 13. On January 6 he was assigned to the Army of Occupation, and is at present on duty in the evacuation hospital of the 3rd Army at Coblenz.

Private Guy Bard, Denver, Pa., went overseas last September. After being twice in hospital over there, he was transferred to the army postal service the middle of last December, being thus employed at present at Nies Chateau in the western part of France.

Private Harry F. Stauffer, Honeybrook, Pa., a native of Farmersville, associated with the Honeybrook Graphic Publishing Co. Was examined by Local Board No. 3 at Christiana, Pa., Feb. 25, 1918. Was sent to Camp Meade where he remained until mustered out December 12, 1918.

Minutes of the March Meeting.

The Lancaster County Historical Society had a largely attended and interesting meeting on Friday evening, March 5, 1919, in their rooms, in the A. Herr Smith Memorial Library Building, on Duke Street. Judge Charles I. Landis presided, and Harry Stehman, Jr., was Secretary pro tem. Oscar D. Brandenburg, of Madison, Wisconsin, and Mrs. C. M. Steinmetz, of Reading, were proposed for membership.

Treasurer A. K. Hostetter announced the sum of \$450.25 in the treasury. He also, as chairman of the committee on securing a national service flag for the society, presented the banner, with six stars, denoting that many members in the army or navy. One is gold, in honor of the late Theodore W. Scott, pharmacist of the U. S. Navy. The other members are: Captain Sanderson Detwiler, First Lieutenant E. J. Stein, Ensign Harry B. Hostetter, Private Harry F. Stauffer and Private Guy Bard.

Among the donations reported by Librarian Harry Stehman, Jr., was that of three numbers of the Lancaster Tobacco Journal, of the year 1891, the only tobacco journal ever published in this city. The donor was Dr. Frank R. Diffenderffer, who was its editor.

Miss Lottie M. Bausman announced that she had classified and divided into sections 175 important historical letters and other manuscripts owned by the society.

Custodian H. H. Shenk, of the Public Records of the State Library, read the paper of the evening, "Letters of the Honorable John Strohm." These were compiled by Prof. Shenk from letters written by Congressman Strohm and to him, both while he was in the Pennsylvania State Legislature and while Congressman. He was known as "Honest John Strohm." Some of the letters were written to the late Jacob H. Landis, of Millersville, and were made available to the author of the paper by his son, Hon. John H. Landis.

Librarian Harry Stehman, Jr., reported that the following exchanges and donations were also received by the Society during the past month:

International Conciliation pamphlets.

St. John's Messenger, January and February.

Washington Historical Quarterly, January.

Catholic Historical Society Quarterly, December.

Second Report of the Provost Marshal General, December, 1918.

Linden Hall Echo, February.

Chester County Historical Society pamphlets.

Annual Report of Insurance Commissioner, 1918.

Annual Report of Soldiers' Orphan Homes, 1918.

Annual Report of Secretary of Internal Affairs, 1917.

Annual Report of Commissioner on Banking, 1917.

A copy of February 20 issue of The American Printer (New York), and of the Ben Franklin Monthly (Lancaster), March 1st, containing historic local matter, by D. B. Landis.

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