YORK, PENNA., IN THE REVOLUTION.

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In the early troubles incident to the settlement of the country, and the conflict for its liberties, York played an important part and contributed its full share of substantial force, as well as ardent sympathy, to the cause. Her sturdy citizens were among the first to shoulder their muskets in defense of their homes, and the integrity of their country. Indeed, the citizens of York county seem to have been the first in the state in resisting the encroachments of the mother country, and to the close of the Revolution furnished more than their quota of men to the army, men, too, who marked their names prominently upon the desperate struggle for its liberties. Colonel Hartley, in a letter to President Reed of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, says:

"They knew they had been as patriotic as any, that the York district had armed the first in Pennsylvania, and had furnished more men in it than any other district on the continent of the same number of inhabitants."

As early as December, 1774, James Smith, on his return to York from a meeting of the committee for the Province of Pennsylvania, employed himself in raising and drilling a volunteer company, of which he was elected the captain. This was the first corps of volunteer soldiers organized in Pennsylvania with a view to oppose the armies of Great Britain. The officers of this company were, James Smith, Captain; Thomas Hartley, First Lieutenant; David Grier, Second Lieutenant, and Henry Miller, Ensign. Each of these officers thus early attached to the cause of liberty, became distinguished in the subsequent history of the
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country. James Smith was a member of Congress, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Hartley was a colonel in the Revolution, and for twelve years a member of Congress. David Grier was Lieutenant Colonel of the Seventh Pennsylvania Regiment, ranking from October 2d, 1776, and Henry Miller was First Lieutenant of the first company that marched from Pennsylvania to the seat of war. He not long afterward was appointed to the command of the company. On November 12th, 1777, he was promoted by Congress Major in Colonel Hand's regiment, and the year following Lieutenant Colonel in the Second Regiment of the Pennsylvania Line. He continued in this office until he resigned his commission in 1779. Col. Miller was distinguished for his cool bravery wherever he served, and possessed the entire confidence of Gen. Washington.

Under resolution of Congress, June 14th, 1775, a company of riflemen was recruited by Captain Michael Doudel in York. This company became attached to the battalion of riflemen commanded by Col. William Thomson, whose officers received the first commissions issued by Congress after Washington's. The battalion was composed of six companies from Pennsylvania, two from Maryland, and two from Virginia. Captain Doudel's company left York on the 1st of July, 1775, for Boston, and arrived at Cambridge, Mass., July 25th. To this company belongs the honor of being the first to arrive at Cambridge from any point south of Long Island and west of the Hudson river. The first action in which it participated was in the evening of July 29th, and before the remainder of the regiment had arrived. Captain Doudel was not long afterward succeeded in the command by his First Lieutenant, Henry Miller.

Early in May, 1776, a rifle company which had been enlisted to serve fifteen months, marched from York to Philadelphia, where it was attached to Col. Samuel Miles' rifle regiment. The captain of this company was Philip Albright, who was appointed from York county March 19th, 1776, and resigned January 23rd, 1777. William McPherson, the
Second Lieutenant of the company, was captured at Long Island, August 27th, 1776.

In July, 1776, five battalions of militia marched from York county to New Jersey. Out of these five battalions there were formed two battalions of the Flying Camp. The first battalion, commanded by Col. Michael Swope, was composed of eight companies, and the second battalion was commanded by Col. Richard McAllister, Lieut. Col. David Kennedy, and Major John Clark. The regiment of Col. Swope suffered very severely in the battles of Long Island and Fort Washington. The company of Capt. Graeff was captured at the battle of Long Island, and but eighteen men returned to join the command. Col. Swope and fourteen of his officers were taken prisoners when Fort Washington, on the Hudson, fell into the hands of the enemy on the 16th of November, 1776. Ensign Jacob Barnitz, of York, was wounded in this battle, and lay for fifteen months in prison.

Towards the close of the year 1777, events were occurring which brought into prominence the town of York, and made it for a time the capital of the now independent states of America. The Continental Congress was in session here for nine months, and its proceedings were of the greatest importance.

The disastrous battle of Brandywine, fought on the 11th of September, 1777, decided the fate of Philadelphia. On the approach of the British towards the Schuylkill, Congress adjourned to meet in Lancaster on the 27th of September, and on the same day adjourned to York. The Susquehanna was regarded as a safe barrier between them and the enemy, and they began their renewed session on September 30th, where they continued until the British evacuated the city, the following summer.

John Adams, after his arrival in York, on September 30th, in a letter to his wife, wrote:

"I am very comfortably situated here in the house of General Robêr-deau, whose hospitality has taken in Mr. S. Adams, Mr. Gerry and Me."
On the 25th of October, his letter describes the town of York and its churches:

"This town is a small one, not larger than Plymouth. There are in it two German churches, the one Lutheran, the other Calvinistical. The congregations are pretty numerous, and their attendance upon public worship is decent. It is remarkable that the Germans wherever they are found, are careful to maintain the public worship, which is more than can be said of the other denominations of Christians this way. There is one church here erected by the joint contributions of Episcopalians and Presbyterians, but the minister, who is a missionary, is confined for Toryism, so that they have had for a long time no public worship. Congress have appointed two chaplains, Mr. White and Mr. Duffield, the former of whom, an Episcopalian, is arrived, and opens Congress with prayers every day. The latter is expected every hour. Mr. Duche I am sorry to inform you, has turned out an apostate and a traitor. Poor man; I pity his weakness and detest his wickedness."

Mr. Adams, in his letter of October 28th, 1777, says:

"We have been three days soaking in the heaviest rain that has been known for several years. I am in comfortable lodgings, which is a felicity which has fallen to the lot of very few of our members. Yet the house where I am is so thronged that I cannot enjoy such accommodations as I wish. I cannot have a room as I used, and therefore cannot find opportunities to write as I once did."

In the Colonial court house of York, which stood in the centre of the square, Congress assembled on the 30th of September, 1777, and continued in session until the 27th of June, 1778. This historic building was taken down in 1841.

During that autumn the old court house echoed with the joyous tidings of the surrender of Burgoyne, but the following winter was one of gloom and dread; Washington and his weakened army were suffering at Valley Forge.

On the 17th of October, 1777, Congress resolved, that the Committee of Intelligence be authorized to take the most speedy and effective measures for getting a printing press erected in Yorktown for the purpose of conveying to
the public the intelligence that Congress might from time to time receive. The press of Hall and Sellers, of Philadelphia, was shortly afterward brought to York, where different public communications were printed, as was likewise much Continental money. This was the first printing press erected in Pennsylvania west of the Susquehanna.

John Hancock, President of Congress, resigned October 31st, 1777, in consequence of ill health, and was succeeded by Henry Laurens, of South Carolina.

On November 1st, 1777, a resolution was passed by Congress, recommending the legislative or executive powers of the United States to set apart the eighteenth day of December for solemn thanksgiving and praise. This was the first recommendation for a day of national thanksgiving issued since the formation of the government.

On the 15th of November, Congress adopted the Articles of Confederation, after having debated the subject three times a week for nearly seven months. A new Board of War was organized on November 27th, composed of General Mifflin, Joseph Trumbull, Richard Peters, Colonel Pickering and General Gates, who was appointed President of the Board.

Baron Steuben, a veteran commander, and aide-de-camp to Frederick the Great, in the seven years' war, landed at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on the 1st of December, 1777, whence he journeyed to York, where he arrived February 5th, 1778, and remained two weeks. By Washington's direction he proceeded direct to Congress, was received with every mark of distinction, his services were accepted, and he was appointed Inspector General of the army.

The treaty between France and the United States was ratified by Congress on the 4th of May, 1778, and the day following, a supplement of Hall and Sellers' Gazette gave an account of the important news, and also the principal articles of the alliance. In the evening of May 6th, the entire town showed its joy by illuminations.
While Congress sat at York, it lost by death, on June 11th, 1778, Philip Livingston, a delegate from the State of New York, and one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He was interred on the evening of the 12th, in the graveyard of the German Reformed Church. Mr. Duffield, the Presbyterian Chaplain of Congress, delivered an address at the grave. When the British army evacuated Philadelphia, Congress adjourned to that city on June 27th.

General Gates, who had become a great hero after Burgoyne's surrender, resided on the north side of West Market street, the second house east of Water street.

It was in this historic house that General Lafayette called upon Gates, whom he found surrounded by his friends, seated at table, and it was at this dinner the conspiracy was revealed to supplant General Washington and make General Gates the Commander-in-Chief of the army.

During Gates' residence in York, as President of the Board of War, the well-known incident of the contemplated duel between him and Colonel Wilkinson occurred. The meeting was arranged to take place at 8 o'clock in the morning behind St. John's Episcopal Church, on North Beaver street, but before the appointed hour had arrived, the difficulty between them was adjusted.

On the 26th of February, 1781, General Anthony Wayne was ordered to command a detachment from the Pennsylvania Line, which it had been determined to send as a reinforcement to General Greene, then in charge of military affairs in the South.

"When I arrived at York," wrote Wayne on May 20th, 1781, "there was scarcely a horse or a carriage fit to transport any part of our baggage or supplies. The troops were retarded in advancing to the general rendezvous by the unaccountable delay of the auditors who were appointed to settle and pay the proportion of the depreciation due them, which when received was not equal to one-seventh part of its nominal value. This was an alarming circumstance. The soldiers but too sensibly felt the imposition, nor did the conduct or the counsel of the inhabitants tend to moderate, but rather to inflame their minds by refusing to part with anything which the soldiers
needed, in exchange for it, saying it was not worth accepting, and that they (the soldiers) ought not to march until justice was done them. To minds already susceptible to this kind of impression, and whose recent revolt was fresh in their memory, little more was wanting to stimulate them to try it again. The day antecedent to that on which the march was to commence, a few mutineers on the right of each regiment called out to pay them in real and not ideal money: they were no longer to be trifled with. Upon this they were ordered to their tents, which being peremptorily refused, the principals were immediately either knocked down or confined by their officers, who were previously prepared for this event. A court-martial was ordered on the spot. The commission of the crime, trial, and execution, were all included in the course of a few hours, in front of the line paraded under arms. The determined countenances of the officers produced a conviction to the soldiery that the sentence of the court-martial would be carried into execution at every risk and consequence. Whether by design or accident the particular friends and messmates of the culprits were their executioners, and while the tears rolled down their cheeks in showers, they silently and faithfully obeyed their orders without a moment's hesitation. Thus was this hideous monster crushed in its birth, however, to myself and officers a most painful scene.'

This mutiny and execution took place on the Public Common. The bodies were interred in Potter's Field, adjoining.

On the 20th of May, Wayne's corps, smaller in number than he had anticipated, and by no means well equipped, but reduced to discipline and harmony, marched southward from York.

James Smith was perhaps the most eccentric in character among all those illustrious men who affixed their names to the Declaration of Independence. He commenced the practice of the law in York, and continued in it with few intermissions until near the time of his death, and for many years was the only lawyer in the town. At the commencement of the Revolution he was one of the warmest friends of our liberties. When the company which he had recruited was increased to a regiment, he accepted the honorary title of Colonel, leaving to younger men the duty of actual command. Mr. Smith was elected a member of the convention
which assembled on the 15th of July, 1776, for the purpose of forming a new Constitution for Pennsylvania, and on the 20th of July, the convention proceeded to ballot for nine members of Congress, and Mr. Smith was one of the nine elected. He was re-elected again in December, 1777. So completely was every private consideration sacrificed to the general good, that his office was closed against his clients, and given up to the occupation of the Board of War and the Committee of Foreign Affairs. A valuable collection of letters from Franklin, Adams, and other patriots of the Revolution, was, unfortunately, lost in the year 1805, when his office, with all its contents, was destroyed by fire.

James Smith lived on South George street, opposite Christ Lutheran Church, where the residence of Mr. Granville Hartman now stands. He owned the block of ground extending from Mason alley to King street. His office stood on George street at the corner formed by George street and Mason alley.

Colonel Thomas Hartley played an important rôle in the history of York. When eighteen years of age he commenced the study of the law under the tuition of Mr. Samuel Johnson, and was admitted to practice in the courts on the 25th of July, 1769, being the second lawyer of York. Early distinguished as a warm friend of his country, in the year 1774, he was elected by the citizens of the county a member of the Provincial meeting of deputies which was held at Philadelphia on the 15th of July, and in the year 1775 a member of the Provincial convention which was held at Philadelphia on the 23rd of January.

On the breaking out of hostilities, he was commissioned Lieutenant Colonel, and later Colonel, in the Pennsylvania Line, and for three years served with distinction, when he resigned in February of 1779. He also served in the Assembly; the Council of Censors; State Convention to ratify the Constitution of the United States, and for twelve years in Congress. He died December 21, 1800.
The house in which Colonel Hartley lived was the most expensively constructed private residence in York. It stood on the site now occupied by Trinity Reformed Church.

Archibald McLean was an ardent patriot, and one of the prominent citizens of York. He was a surveyor, and the chief assistant of Mason and Dixon in running the famous line, which bears their name. In 1776 he was chosen a member of the Assembly of Pennsylvania; the next year became chairman of the Committee of Safety, and served as Prothonotary, Register and Recorder for York county 1777 to 1786. His residence stood on the northeast angle of Centre Square, and was the seat of the Treasury, during the sitting of Congress in York.

On the 17th of April, 1777, Congress changed the name of the “Committee of Secret Correspondence” to “Committee of Foreign Affairs,” and appointed Thomas Paine, secretary of the Committee.

His “American Crisis,” Number V, addressed to General Sir William Howe, commenced in the house of Hon. William Henry at Lancaster, was finished and printed at York.

Major John André, afterwards executed as a spy, was in York for a short time after he was taken prisoner at St. John’s (on the Sorel) September, 1775, and was from there transferred to Carlisle. The Rev. Dr. Andrews, Rector of St. John’s Episcopal Church, showed him much hospitality when in York on parole.

General Washington visited York in 1791, when he journeyed from Mount Vernon to Philadelphia. The incidents of this visit are gathered from the *Pennsylvania Herald and York General Advertiser*, a weekly paper published in York; from the diary of Rev. John Roth, pastor of the Moravian church of York, and the diary of the President.

President Washington arrived in York from Hanover, at 2 o’clock in the afternoon of July 2nd, 1791, and took lodging at the tavern of Baltzer Spangler, which stood on the north side of Market street, the second house from Centre Square.
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The Pennsylvania Herald and York General Advertiser, in its issue of July 6th, 1791, gives the following account:

"Saturday last the President of the United States arrived here from Mount Vernon, on his way to Philadelphia. His arrival, which was about 2 o'clock, was announced by the ringing of bells. The Independent Light Infantry Company, commanded by Captain George Hay, paraded, and being drawn up before His Excellency's lodging, fired fifteen rounds. At night there were illuminations and every other demonstration of joy. The next morning His Excellency was waited upon by the Chief Burgess and the principal inhabitants, and the following address was presented to him, after which he attended divine service, and then proceeded on his journey. He was accompanied as far as Wright's Ferry, by a number of the principal inhabitants."

"To the President of the United States:

"Sir:—With sentiments of the most perfect esteem and attachment, the citizens of the borough of York beg leave to present to you their sincere congratulations on your safe arrival here, after an extensive tour through that country which owes so much to your brave and prudent exertions in war and to your wise and just administration in peace. We cordially join in the general satisfaction and joy which all the citizens of America feel in seeing you; and in those universal sentiments of regard to your person and veneration for your character, which dictate the addresses that in various expressions have been offered to you. We join in the general satisfaction that every friend to human happiness must feel in finding that the people of the United States do now show a great and convincing proof to all the world that freedom and good government are perfectly compatible. And that the first magistrate unanimously chosen by the people may at once possess their utmost veneration and most hearty regard.

"We wish you a safe return to the seat of government, and do sincerely unite with the millions of America in praying that the Supreme Governor of the Universe may long continue a life which he has so eminently distinguished, in preserving and securing the best rights and happiness of the citizens of this greatly favored country."

To which the President replied:

"To the Citizens of the Borough of York:

"Gentlemen:—I receive your congratulations with pleasure, and reply to your flattering and affectionate expressions of esteem with sincere and grateful regard."
The satisfaction which you derive from the congeniality of freedom with good government, which is clearly evinced in the happiness of our highly favored country, at once reward the patriotism that achieved her liberty, and gives an assurance of its duration.

That your individual prosperity may long continue among the proofs which attest the national welfare, is my earnest wish.”

Rev. John Roth, pastor of the Moravian Church of York, enthusiastically notes General Washington’s visit in his diary:

“On the 2nd of July, 1791, in the afternoon at 2 o’clock came the Honorable President Washington to Yorktown; all the bells of the town rang in honor of the event, as if the voices of the archangels sounding in harmony, commanded attention. I could not repress my tears at the thought of all this, indeed I cried aloud, not from a sense of sadness, but from a feeling of very joyfulness. In the evening there was a general illumination, and in the court house in each pane was set a light.”

President Washington describes his visit to York as follows:

“Saturday, 2nd, we came to Hanover, commonly called McAlister-town, a very pretty village with a good inn; we breakfasted, and in eighteen miles more we reached Yorktown, where we dined and lodged. After dinner, in company with Colonel Hartley and other gentlemen, I walked through the principal streets of the town, and drank tea at Colonel Hartley’s. The court house was illuminated.

“Sunday, July 3rd, received and answered an address from the people of Yorktown, and there being no Episcopal minister present in the place, I went to hear morning service performed in the Dutch [German] Reformed Church, which being in that language, not a word of which I understood, I was in no danger of becoming a proselyte to its religion by the eloquence of the preacher. After service, accompanied by Colonel Hartley and half dozen other gentlemen, I set off for Lancaster.”