CHARLES WHEELER, M.D.

BY REV. HORACE EDWIN HAYDEN.

In the army which Lord Dunmore raised in the Northern counties of Virginia and rendezvoused at Fort Pitt in 1774, to inaugurate that disgraceful war which resulted in the loss of so many brave men to the colony of Virginia at the battle of Point Pleasant, was a young physician named Charles Wheeler.

Of his history very little is known and that little is recorded here to rescue from oblivion the memory of one who occupied a position which would justly entitle him to remembrance.

Charles Wheeler was the only Surgeon attached to Lord Dunmore's army. He was born in London, England, about 1742, and was educated and married there. He emigrated in 1769 to America. Where he studied medicine, whether in England or America is not known. Neither the Medical College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania), nor Kings College, New York (now Columbia University), record his name as student. He and his wife Elizabeth were among the earliest settlers of what was then the western portion of Pennsylvania and Virginia. At what exact point he settled there cannot be learned.

When Lord Dunmore issued his call for troops to march against the Indians in 1774 Dr Wheeler was among the first to respond and was appointed Surgeon to the command. He subsequently, it is said, entered the Revolutionary Army and served through the war whether as Surgeon or Private tradition does not say. However, every effort to prove this tradition has failed on the part of the writer. He is not named in any roster of Pennsylvania or Virginia troops.
Charles Wheeler, M.D.

Shortly after the close of the war, he removed to Washington county, Pennsylvania, and entered actively upon the practice of his profession.

In May, 1786, he purchased of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the sum of £13.10.7d three hundred and forty-five acres of land called "Winters Choice" on Pike's Run. His warrant is dated May 2, 1786. In the Pennsylvania Archives it is described as 300 acres. Earlier, however, than May 12, 1779, he secured from the State 300 acres in "Youghiogheny" county. As "Yough county" as it was commonly called was of short duration it is possible that this land was identical with the grant of May, 1789, and which fell into the possession some years ago of O/K, Taylor, the Banker of Bridgeport, Fayette county.

Dr. Wheeler was a man of extensive learning, skillful as a physician and prominent as a citizen. But he kept himself from politics and filled no offices of a political character. He died September, 1813, leaving an estate of about £3000, which was divided between his wife and servants. At his death his family consisted only of himself and wife. In the Census of 1790 he is credited with a family of eight white persons, including one white female under sixteen years of age. In his will which is dated May 26, 1808, and was probated at Washington, Penna., December 6, 1813, he says "the little which I have is of my own acquiring. As it was not my lot to have issue by my wife, I did not embark in this world's speculations in search of more than would enable me to live decently and comfortably to my family and friends."

He left all his property to his wife during her life, excepting £100 to the Protestant Episcopal Church at Brownsville, of which he was a member; £100 to a nephew, Thomas Humphreys, and £1000 to his friends and domestics. He had purchased several slaves when he settled in Washington county. To each of these,
living at the time of his death, he willed from £25 to £200 with this wholesome advice: "The above black people were raised under my roof, I therefore hope they will consider the intent of the small bounties bestowed on them by an indulgent Master, and apply themselves discreetly to their interests."

Over the spot where he lies buried in Christ Church yard, at Brownsville, stands a monument of grey sandstone, about seven feet high by two feet square, surmounted by an Urn, and embellished with Masonic emblems. Although I was the Secretary for some years of the Masonic Lodge at Brownsville, I do not recall seeing his name in the list of members; he was probably a member of the Lodge in Washington.

On the monument are these inscriptions:

**South side.**

"To the Memory of
CHARLES WHEELER
M.D.
Who departed this life Sept 1813.
in the 71st year of his age.
He was born in the city of
London England
Where he received a
Classical education"

**North side.**

"Also
in Memory of
ELIZABETH his Wife
who departed this life Octr 1838.
in the 94th year of her age.
They Emigrated to
America in 1769."
Charles Wheeler, M.D.

West side.

"In the year 1774 he was the only Physician and Surgeon in Lord Dunmore's Army. They emigrated to Western Pa amongst the first settlers, and by a long and successful practice he endeared himself to hundreds. They were generous friends and good Citizens."

East side.

"They died without Issue and left an Estate of about 10,000 Dollars to their Friends, the Church and their Domesticks, and I Joseph Crawford one of his Executors Consecrate this Monument to their Memory in 1840."

Who Joseph Crawford was beyond the record on the monument has not been as yet learned.