The Romance of Local History
By Joseph H. Bansman

(Continued from January issue)

In the fall of 1767, learning that some Indians on the Allegheny River (then known as the Ohio) were desirous of hearing the gospel, Zeisberger of the Moravian Church at Bethlehem, with one or two assistants, visited them, and established a mission station near the mouth of Tionesta Creek in what is now Venango County, Pennsylvania. After severe trials and opposition at that place, which was appropriately called Goschgoschunk, or "the place of hogs," he removed, with his assistants and some converts, to the Big Beaver, and built near the present town of Moravia in what is now Lawrence County (until 1849 a part of Beaver County) a village to which was given the Delaware name of Langundo-utenink, in German, Friedenstadt in English, the "City of Peace."

The first settlement was made on the east side of the river, May 7, 1770, but in the latter part of July following the location was changed to the western side. Here were erected substantial log houses with stone foundations and chimneys, a blacksmith's shop, and a church which was the first house of worship dedicated to God in the Ohio valley. Patiently Zeisberger labored here for three years assisted by other missionaries sent out at different times from Bethlehem, among whom was John Heckewelder, previously mentioned, one of the ablest of men and Christians. Many converts were made here among the Indians who later sealed their testimony with their blood, and so sincere and simple was the life of these humble men and women, both leaders and laity, so pure and Christ-like were they that every lover of the good must do them reverence. We are fortunate in the fact that we have in the Diary of the Rev. David McClure, of whom I have already spoken, a picture of this truly "simple life" (the simple life was not with these Moravians a mere phase or fad as it is in danger of becoming with many today, but a deep spiritual fact), and I shall venture to quote a part of the account which he gives of his visit in September, to Friedenstadt, as follows:

"It was a neat Moravian village, consisting of one
street and houses pretty compact, on each side, with gardens back. There was a convenient Log church, with a small bell, in which the Indians assembled for morning and evening prayer. . . . The missionaries have their wives and families with them. They received me with great hospitality. At the sound of the bell, the Indians assembled in the church for evening prayer. It was lighted with candles around the walls on which hung some common paintings of Jesus in the manger of Bethlehem, with Joseph and Mary; Jesus on the cross; and the Resurrection, etc. On one side sat the elderly men and boys by themselves, and on the other the women and girls. The evening exercise consisted of devout hymns in the Indian language, and in singing they all, young and old, bore a part, and the devotion was solemn and impressive. After singing a number of hymns, the missionary addressed them, in a short exhortation in the Indian language. And they retired with great order and stillness to their houses. Their hymns are prayers addressed to Jesus Christ, the lamb of God, who died for the sins of men and exhortations and resolutions to abstain from sin, because sin is most displeasing to him and to live in love and practice of good works, as he has given us an example.

"The same exercise was observed also early in the morning of the following day. I was agreeably surprised to find so devout and orderly a congregation of Christian Indians in the wilderness, and pleased with the meek and friendly deportment of the Missionaries.

"The Moravians appear to have adopted the best mode of Christianizing the Indians. They go among them without noise or parade, and by their friendly behaviour conciliate their good will. They join them in the chase, and freely distribute to the helpless and gradually instil into the minds of individuals the principles of religion. They then invite them who are disposed to harken to them, to retire to some convenient place, at a distance from the wild Indians, and assist them to build a village, and teach them to plant and sow and to carry on some coarse manufactures.

"Those Indians, thus separated, reverence and love their instructors, as their fathers, and withdraw a connection with the wild or drinking Indians. Among other instances of the attachment and respect which the Indians show them, I noticed the following circumstance, which my Interpreter explained.
"In the morning an Indian with his gun and small pack, and his wife, came into the house of the missionary. After conversing in a very friendly manner, the missionary affectionately saluted the Indian man on the cheek, and shook the hand of his wife; and the wife of the missionary saluted the cheek of the squaw, and they departed well pleased. The substance of the conversation was as follows:

"Indian—Father, I am going a hunting.  
Missionary—How long, my friend, do you expect to be gone? And where will you go?  
Indian—About six weeks (mentioning the place or point of compass he was going).  
Missionary—Well, dear friends, be always mindful of your blessed Saviour, and do nothing to displease Him, who loved you and died for you. Go not in the way of the wild Indians; but if you meet them show them much love and kindness. Be careful to pray your hymns to Jesus every night and every morning. May God bless and prosper you, and bring you back in peace and safety."

Is not that a charming picture? We are familiar with the phrase "the romance of Missions." Here, surely, in our Western wilderness, on the banks of the beautiful Beaver, was a rare example of it. Not Ulfilas among his Goths, nor Boniface in the dark German forests, nor Austin among the pagan Saxons, reveals a more heroic figure than that of David Zeisberger or John Heckewelder among the Deleware Indians at Friedenstadt; nor could the holy isles of Iona or Lindisfarne have nourished a sweeter piety than that which was shown there.

But this noble work was not allowed to continue. Troubles and dangers had for some time been thickening about the little mission, and an invitation to remove to the Tuscarawas in the present State of Ohio, which had come from the chief and council of the Indians there, had also for some weeks been under consideration by the leaders of the mission and their superiors in the home church at Bethlehem.

In 1773, the state of the frontier had become so alarming and the opposition and jealousy of their wild Indian neighbors so great that it was not thought safe for the brethren to remain longer at Friedenstadt. Kuskuskee was not far off, and the whiskey trader was already there,
adding the white man's vices to the passion of the savage. Drunken mobs coming down from that place overran the town, and the "City of Peace" was often turned into a bedlam. The resolution of the missionaries to abandon their station was finally taken, and accordingly on the thirteenth of April, 1773, the Moravians deserted Friedenstein. They destroyed their chapel with their own hands, in order that it might not be desecrated by the wild Indians, who had intimated their intention to convert it into a house of sacrifice and "medicine-dancing". Then they bade farewell forever to the scene of three years of toils and triumphs, of joys and sorrows, and at the call of Zeisberger, the little band of converts set out for the valley of the Tuscarawas. There, nine years later, was enacted the most horrid tragedy that blackens the page of border annals,

"marked with a blot, damn'd in the book of heaven," when our Washington County militia, under circumstances of the greatest treachery and barbarity, butchered ninety-six of these "tawny sheep of Jesus Christ." On the spot at Gnadenhutten, Ohio, where these Christian Indian martyrs fell, a shaft has been erected commemorating their sufferings. No spot in Western Pennsylvania is more worthy to be considered sacred than that on which stood their "City of Peace." There, too, some memorial ought to be built to the men whose labors and self-sacrifice made it sacred, a monument whose inscriptions would raise the thought and touch the heart of generations yet to come.

Many other events of interest belong to the history of this region during the Revolutionary period, each of which forms a picture upon which I should like to dwell, but I have only time left to throw one or two of them for an instant upon the screen.

The tide of war during the Revolution did not, indeed, break over the barrier of the Alleghenies, but west of Fort Pitt, at Detroit and in Illinois, were the English forces, and in the territory between were the hostile Indian tribes under British pay. And against these combined odds the pioneers of Western Pennsylvania stood as
did the embattled farmers of New England. The fall of 1777 saw a fearful increase of Indian hostilities along the western borders, and in the following May two regiments of Pennsylvania and Virginia militia were raised for the Western Department. General Edward Hand had then lately, at his own request, been relieved from the command of this Department, and Brigadier-General Lachlan McIntosh of Georgia was appointed by Washington as his successor. An expedition against the British at Detroit and their Indian allies which had been voted by Congress and which McIntosh was to lead, had had for several reasons to be abandoned for that year. McIntosh, however, kept Detroit ever in mind as his objective, and during the time in which his plans had to be held in abeyance he bent all his energies to ensure their ultimate success. In order to secure a footing of considerable strategic importance, whence he could quickly march either westward into the Indian country or in the more northerly direction to Detroit, the commander now moved down the Ohio River to the mouth of the Big Beaver Creek, where, upon the site of the present town of Beaver, he built in the fall of 1778, by fatigue of the whole line, the structure which bore in honor of himself the name Fort McIntosh. Later he built about seventy-five miles farther west, near the site of the present town of Bolivar, Ohio, another and smaller fort which was named for the then president of the Continental Congress, Henry Laurens, Fort Laurens.

Fort McIntosh was a small fort built entirely of logs, and under modern military conditions would be insignificant enough, but in its own day, and for the purpose for which it was erected it was an important undertaking. It was noteworthy as having been the first military post of the United States established upon the "Indian side" of the Ohio, i. e. upon the northern side of the river, and, when, in 1778, the headquarters of the army were removed to it from Fort Pitt, there was assembled there the largest force ever collected west of the mountains during the Revolutionary War, a force numbering in all about thirteen hundred men.

The erection of this fort was severely criticized by Colonel Daniel Brodhead, who succeeded McIntosh in the
command of the Western Department. He calls it "that very romantic building which was erected by the hands of hundreds who would rather have fought than wrought," and "the hobby-horse which he (McIntosh) built at Beaver Creek;" but Washington approved its erection, and Henry Knox, the first Secretary of War under the Constitution, speaks of it as "being estimated of considerate importance in a defensive system for the frontiers."

The condition of the garrison here was at times one of great hardship, and the discipline was often harsh in the extreme. Flogging of the men with as high as one hundred and twenty lashes at one period was an almost daily event, and several soldiers were shot without the formality of a courtmartial. The Indians were always skulking about the fort, watching for a chance to pick off the unwary, and sometimes in dry seasons they set fire to the surrounding woods in hopes that the flames or sparks would ignite the buildings. There are touches which relieve the picture of its gloom, however;—such as this little bit from a letter from Josiah Harmar to Colonel Francis Johnston, dated at this post, June 21, 1785:

"I wish you were here to view the beauties of Fort McIntosh. What think you of pike of 25 pounds, perch 15 to 20 pounds, catfish 40 pounds, bass, pickerel, sturgeon, etc. You would certainly enjoy yourself. It is very fortunate there is such an abundance of fish, as the contractor for this place sometime past has failed in his supplies of beef.

"This would be a glorious season for Col. Wood, or any extravagant lover of strawberries, the earth is most abundantly covered with them; we have them in such plenty that I am almost surfeited with them. The addition of fine rich cream is not lacking."

Many important transactions took place at Fort McIntosh, and it was either under the command of, or was visited by many men famous in the days of the Revolution and afterwards; such as Colonel John Gibson, Major Ebenezer Denny, Arthur Lee, and Generals Richard Butler and George Rogers Clark. The three last named, Lee, Butler, and Clark, were the Commissioners Plenipotentiary of the United States at the treaty which was made with
the Delaware and Wyandot Indians at Fort McIntosh in January, 1785. At this treaty many prisoners held by the Indians were surrendered. Among these surrendered captives was James Lyon, for many years afterwards a highly respected citizen of Beaver. We are accustomed to think of the period of the Indian occupation of this region as having been at a great distance of time; it seems almost as remote to us as the Neolithic Age; and yet how close it will seem when I tell you that there is living in the town of Beaver today a lady in the full possession of all her mental and physical faculties who is the child of James Lyon, that same Indian captive:—not his great great grand-daughter, nor his great grand-daughter, nor his grand-daughter, but his daughter. This is Sarah K. (Lyon) Allison, the widow of Dr. George W. Allison. Dr. Allison was the third son of the Hon. James Allison, Jr., and was born here in Washington. His father was a nephew of David Bradford, in whose office he studied law.

On the demolition of Fort McIntosh in 1789, there were erected, by order of the War Department, at what is now New Brighton, a block-house which also was of some importance in the period immediately succeeding the Revolutionary War. It was at this block-house, that, in the spring of 1791, the famous scout, Captain Sam Brady, and a party of rangers came upon a number of Indians who were trading there at the store of William Wilson, an Indian trader, and without parley, killed several of them. Two years later Brady was tried at Pittsburgh for this murder and was acquitted. Guyasutha, the Indian chief was Brady's principal witness, and swore up and down through thick and thin for him. After the trial, James Ross, Esq., Brady's counsel, spoke to Guyasutha, expressing his surprise at the readiness of the latter to swear to anything and everything that favored his client. Slapping his breast, the old chief proudly exclaimed, "Am I not the friend of Brady!"

In November, 1789, a sad accident occurred near this block-house. General Samuel Holden Parsons, a noted soldier and statesman of Connecticut, had been sent out by his State to survey the lands of Western Reserve. In
company with Captain Heart he had reached the Salt Springs in what is now called Ohio, but a severe cold which he had contracted some weeks before unfitted him for farther travel and he decided to return to Fort Pitt. On his way back he had reached the Beaver, when sending a man with his horses around by land with a message to Lieutenant McDowell at the block-house saying that he would be there for dinner, he in a foolhardy manner attempted to run the rapids (what are now called the Falls) of that stream in a canoe, having for a companion in his desperate venture a man with a broken leg. The canoe was in some way upset, and both its occupants were drowned. The body of General Parsons was found six months later at the mouth of the Beaver, and was buried in the block-house graveyard.

I have time left for only one thing more and not sufficient time for that. On the right bank of the Ohio River, seven miles above the mouth of the Big Beaver, is a half-mile stretch of land which has more historic interest than any other spot of equal extent in Western Pennsylvania, with the possible exception of the bit of ground where stood Fort Pitt. Here was Logstown, of which I have already, but inadequately, spoken; here, in 1825, was begun the last settlement of the Harmony Society, certainly one of the most interesting social and economic experiments ever made, to which I can only make this passing allusion, and here, too, in the winter of 1792-1793, was the campground of Anthony Wayne, where he drilled his Legions for his great campaign against the Miami Indians. I should require an hour to give you the data in my possession concerning Wayne's encampment at Legionville, most of which I have obtained from original sources, such as his own letters and Orderly Books, etc. Suffice it to say that the ground here occupied by Wayne was named by him Legionville because his army was officially known as "The Legion of the United States." The Legion was divided into four sub-legions. It was largely recruited at Fort La Fayette in Pittsburgh in the summer and fall of 1792, and in November of that year it was moved down to its winter quarters at the place named.
The site chosen for the encampment was a very favorable one, being on the second terrace of the Ohio River, with that stream on its rear, Logstown Run on its right flank, a deep ravine on its left flank and with steep declivities on three sides, around which as well as on the front deep entrenchments were made, with redoubts from which the lines of the entrenchments could be swept with an enfilading fire. In a letter to General Knox, Secretary of War which I have read, Wayne says: "I have made choice of an encampment on the bank of the river from which all the Indians in the wilderness could not dislodge us." I may say that in the woods, where the ground has not been disturbed by cultivation, the remaining intrenchments of this camp in some places, especially around the redoubts, are still, after more than a century, six and seven feet deep.

In his new camp at Legionville, as at Pittsburgh, Wayne continued the work of turning his raw recruits into a compact and disciplined army. His labors by day and by night were unceasing, for his men were totally inexperienced, and even his officers were for the most part without adequate military training. The frightful defeats of Harmar and St. Clair a few years before by the very Indians against whom he was now going had completely unnerved the soldiers, and the very bravest could not look forward to another encounter with them without foreboding disaster; the commander had therefore not only to give his troops the training of soldiers, but he also had to lift them from despondency and to inspire them with the confidence of victory against a capable and ruthless enemy. And all this he did while suffering with a malady which threatened to cut him off at any moment. Writing from Legionville to his brother-in-law Captain William Hayman of Chester County, he describes his sickness, which was a violent lax and bilious vomiting, and says: "besides, every moment of my time is absorbed in public business—the defense of upward of one thousand miles, and in providing for and disciplining a new army who have yet to learn the dreadful trade of DEATH."

In April of 1793, the camp at Legionville broke up and the army descended the Ohio in boats to Fort Wash-
ington (now Cincinnati); its passage presenting a splendid and inspiring pageant which was watched with interest by the settlers on the banks, and doubtless also by many a dusky Indian warrior hidden in the verdure of the forests which then lined the shores of the “Beautiful River”. After a deliberate and cautious advance across the country, building forts as he went, Wayne, in August of the following year (1794), met the Indians at Maumee Rapids, and in a decisive and brilliant action completely overwhelmed them. This engagement is sometimes called the battle of Fallen Timbers from the fact that the Indians had taken their position behind a long line of forest trees which had sometime before been prostrated by a tornado. But the natural barrier thus provided was no obstacle to the impetuous leader who now attacked them. In the caution of his advance, and in tremendous force with which he delivered his final blow Wayne fully justified the two sobriquets of “Black Snake” and “Tornado” which the Indians themselves had bestowed upon them.

The battle of Fallen Timbers is one of the decisive battles in American History. Its importance lies in the fact that its results were threefold, viz., local, national, and international. Let me briefly state these results.

Its local effect was this. Previous to Wayne’s victory and his treaty with the Indians at Greenville in the following year (1795), the whole region beyond the Ohio was hermetically sealed against settlement by the whites. It was called the “Indian Country,” and the rights of the Indians therein were carefully guarded by the Government. Its soil was untrodden except by soldiers, traders and a few adventurous men who tried to make settlements in spite of Government orders and Indian tomahawks. After the treaty of Greenville settlement became safe and lawful and the pioneers began to enter the country by scores and hundreds. The extent of this immigration is indicated in a letter from Judge Alexander Addison to Governor Mifflin, in which he is urging the erection in that region of machinery of law and justice. He says: “The idea of a new county ought to be fixed and prosecuted as soon as possible. I dread the consequence of the flood of mad people who have gone over the Allegheny
and Ohio to make settlements; their number is inconceivable, and they will, perhaps, be dangerous, unless law can be brought in among them."

The next, or the national, result of Wayne's victory was its effect upon the Indians along the Great Lakes, and in Georgia, and other Southern States. Encouraged by the bloody triumphs of the Miami warriors, the former were just on the eve of an uprising against the whites. But after they had heard of the crushing defeat suffered by the Miami Confederacy they had no stomach for fight and settled down into a lasting peace.

The international effect of this victory was even more important. Until now, although the definitive treaty of peace between the Americans and Great Britain had been signed in 1783, the British still held twelve military posts in the Northwest Territory. The Battle of Fallen Timbers was fought almost under the guns of one of these posts. The savages were being everywhere encouraged by the British to continue their merciless raids upon the frontiers. They were often supplied with British arms, and sometimes led by British officers. In London, too, our minister, Mr. Jay, was vainly trying to bring to a close his negotiations with the British ministry for the surrender of the posts referred to. All this was much changed by Wayne's success. Jay's treaty was immediately signed, the Western posts were given up, and the great Northwest Territory was pacified. We may almost say that this was the actual close of the Revolutionary War. The United States, and especially Western Pennsylvania, owe a greater debt of gratitude to Anthony Wayne than either has ever paid.

But I must close, I trust that I have to some extent made good my thesis—namely—that our local annals are well worthy of our affectionate interest and study. Well may the poet sing:

"Land of the West! where naught is old
Or fading, but tradition hoary—
Thy yet unwritten annals hold
Of many a daring deed the story;
Man's might of arm hath here been tried
And woman's glorious strength of soul."