Beginning of the Early Railroads in Pittsburgh.*

By John P. Cowan

Any consideration of the development of America's transportation system as it relates to the extension of railroads from the Atlantic seaboard through the "Gateway to the West" calls for recognition of the vision, energy and engineering skill of a man who never saw a railroad—whose earthly labors had ceased a generation before the locomotive was invented—but who, nevertheless, passed on to posterity the survey which was adopted by the first railroad trunk line in the world. Ninety-nine years before the advent of a practically operated railroad in western Pennsylvania the possibilities of this locality as a strategic center of transportation were apparent to the youthful eyes of this man of genius. To him the carrier was the thing. The system of transport was secondary and the means of locomotion a trifle.

He made his survey, availing himself of the best means of transport then practicable—canals. He proposed to carry his craft up the waters of the Potomac, to lock them over a mountain range 3,000 feet in altitude, through a tunnel a mile or more in length and down the Ohio with its thousands of miles of navigable tributaries. His project was interrupted by the call to arms. For eight years he led his countrymen in their fight for independence, and after a brief respite, for eight years more he guided the destinies of the nation as its chief magistrate, his life closing before he could revive the transportation activities he had initiated. The world hails him as soldier, patriot and statesman, but just now let us pay homage to the traditions of his profession and honor the sacred memory of that great engineer—George Washington.

On his first visit to the Ohio in 1753, Washington foresaw the advantage of a route connecting the waters of the Potomac with those of the Ohio. He was himself interested in a scheme for the colonization of the Ohio country. The advantage in trade with this region so rich in natural resources was bound to create rivalry among the shipping centers of the eastern colonies. After winning independence and following the conquest of the Indian tribes in the western territory, the new Government was certain to be

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called upon by its citizens of pioneer lands to extend and improve the transportation facilities to the interior. First was the demand for turnpike roads, stage routes; and then, canals. Some of these improvements came in Washington's time. Bear in mind that Washington was the financial backer of Rumsey who made the first practical demonstration of steam navigation. Experiments were made with the tram car. The evolution of the flange-wheel, the rail and finally the application of steam as motive power came in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, and within 50 years after the Declaration of Independence it was foreseen that transportation had been revolutionized. Washington was gone. His canal scheme was revived and acted as a pace-maker for the building of railroads. His canal was not built beyond Cumberland, Md., but the railroad that paralleled the route seized upon Washington's surveys and extended its line down the Castleman and the Youghiogheny to Pittsburgh—and the country of the Ohio.

The consummation of Washington's plan, however, in so far as Pittsburgh is concerned came by various, tedious and romantic degrees of alternate uncertainty and of progress hampered by political animosity, public apathy and financial upheavals. As we look back and read the newspapers of that period, and study the situation that confronted the stout-hearted, public-spirited men who threw the whole energy of their lives in railroad building, only to be thwarted on every hand by narrow-minded, close-fisted obstructionists, grafting politicians and scoundrels of low degree, we are inclined to believe rather that Washington's trunk line, the Baltimore & Ohio, got into Pittsburgh in spite of itself. But it is here and we are proud of it as a distinctive Pittsburgh institution. It has been kicked anduffed but it is true blue—and as long as railroads endure and their right of way respected it will remain alike a monument to Washington and to the patriotic builders who came after him.

It was not until 1827 that the citizens of Pittsburgh took decisive steps to bring about a realization of Washington's dream of a transportation route between their city and the cities on the Chesapeake and Potomac. Several railroads then were in operation in the east. The locomotive was still an unknown quantity, but tram cars hauled
by horses had been demonstrated to be superior to the conestoga wagon and stage coach, and the people felt that the practicable application of steam in locomotion would be successful on land as it had been in propelling steamboats since the days of Rumsey and Robert Fulton. At a public meeting in Pittsburgh a committee was appointed to memorialize the Pennsylvania Legislature to give the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company permission to extend its road to Pittsburgh. This was the year the Baltimore & Ohio Company was organized. In the following year, the Fourth of July, 1828, in a great demonstration in Baltimore, the venerable Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence, laid the foundation for the new trunk line. There was a wild scramble to invest in stock and the railroad mania which pervaded the entire country found many enthusiasts in the frontier town of Pittsburgh.

For many years thereafter Pittsburgh looked with favor on the Baltimore project. The enabling act of the Pennsylvania Legislature had authorized the State to subscribe toward the building of railroads and the first money of the citizens for this purpose went into the fund for the line between Philadelphia and Columbia. The State likewise gave a franchise for the Baltimore & Ohio to build its road from Cumberland along Washington's route into Pittsburgh. Work was accordingly commenced on the Philadelphia-Columbia line, the first unit in the present Pennsylvania system. The Baltimore & Ohio franchises were allowed to lapse.

At the opening of the 70th session of the Pennsylvania Legislature, January 6th, 1846, a battle royal between three cities began in Harrisburg which had an important bearing on the future of transportation. The three cities in this acrimonious controversy were Philadelphia, Baltimore and Pittsburgh. Two railroad bills were introduced and passed—one incorporating the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, and the other authorizing the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company to construct a railroad through Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh. The Baltimore & Ohio bill slipped through under the wire in the closing hours of the session, April 21st, 1846. Both were duly signed by Governor Francis Rawn Shunk. Under the first the Governor was authorized to issue letters patent chartering the Pennsylvania
Railroad Company whenever a given number of commissioners appointed to secure stock subscriptions should certify to him that 50,000 shares at $50 each had been subscribed and $5 a share had been paid in. Under the conditions of the other act the Baltimore & Ohio might extend its road to Pittsburgh under the proviso that if the legislature, during the session of 1846, should pass an act incorporating a company with authority to construct a railroad from Harrisburg within the limits of Pennsylvania, and $3,000,000 should be subscribed to stock of said company, and 10 percent of each share should be actually paid in, and if letters-patent be issued by the Governor, and if 30 miles or more of said railroad should be put under contract for construction, and satisfactory evidence thereof be furnished to the Governor on or before the 30th of July, 1847, then, in that case, the Governor shall issue his proclamation setting forth that fact, and thereupon the Act granting the right of way to the Baltimore & Ohio to extend its road through Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh shall be null and void.

In those days the feeling between the southwestern counties of Pennsylvania and the city of Philadelphia was not one of serene amity. The fathers and grandfathers of the inhabitants of the western counties in the majority of instances came hither from Augusta county, Virginia, or from Baltimore or the southeastern counties of Pennsylvania by the way of the Potomac and Washington’s route, and when they looked back eastward it was with longing eyes—and sometimes with aching hearts toward Baltimore. Outside of the narrow limits of Pittsburgh southwestern Pennsylvania leaned toward the south and had many interests in common with Virginia. Wheeling, Pittsburgh’s biggest near-by municipal neighbor on the west, was a Virginia city and even had a slave market. The Old National Road through Washington, Uniontown and Cumberland to Baltimore and Washington was the popular passenger route to the east. Washington College at Washington, Jefferson College at Canonsburg and other educational institutions here were attended by many southern students. The canal, via Johnstown, the Portage railroads and the Juniata, opened in 1829, were operated by the Pennsylvania Public Works, a State commission that was unpopular in the west. The people here resented the domi-
nation of the Philadelphia "political ring". It was hard for them to believe that improvement in transportation between Pittsburgh and the east—New York and Philadelphia—was the very thing that would bring their political emancipation; that the building of the Pennsylvania railroad would in a few years break up the "canal ring", start the tide of emigration westward, tap the wonderful mineral resources of the western counties, give an unexampled impetus to Pittsburgh's industries and open wide the portals of the "Gateway to the West".

It was hard in those closing days of the 40's for the people of Pittsburgh to realize that the greatest era in the history of their city was at hand. A few years before half their town had been laid in ashes; they were struggling to rebuild; it was a period of social unrest; hundreds of the young men, smitten by the "gold fever" were throwing up their jobs for the perils and uncertainties in seeking their fortunes in the wild diggings of California; the country was riven by political strife; the veterans from a victorious war with Mexico returned to find that their glory in arms had a string to it, and to that string were linked the nauseous manacles of human slavery; already momentous events were casting their shadow before, and this was the awful shadow of civil war.

Not a very bright outlook for the actual beginning of the history of Pittsburgh's railroads. The year is 1851. Picture to yourself a torrid day in summer. A great crowd flocked to the old canal basin in Allegheny. A scow drawn by patient mules was moored to the bank and workmen began arranging a series of rails on the gangplank. On the boat was a machine—wonderful in the eyes of the great throng that crowded about. It was the locomotive "Salem" which had been brought from the eastern shops to go into service on the new Ohio & Pennsylvania Railroad which had just been completed between Allegheny and the towns at the mouth of the Beaver. The "in-jine" was hauled off the scow and coaxed on to the tracks of the railroad. There under a head of steam it was attached to a "brigade" of cars and merrily puffed off amid the plaudits of the crowd. Pittsburgh's first railroad was a fact.

In that crowd were two lads about 12 or 14 years of age for whom the day's proceedings had a keen interest,
but it is doubtful if they dreamed of the important part they would play in the future of Pittsburgh railroads. The boys were of Scotch parentage and lived in humble homes. Their names, as they would have answered their mother’s call on that hot summer day, were “Andy” Carnegie and “Bob” Pitcairn, both destined within 10 years to take their places as operating executives in the Pennsylvania railroad.

In the meantime the work of construction on the “Pennsylvania Central” to connect Pittsburgh with Philadelphia was proceeding as rapidly as the state of finances and the belligerent state of mind of the contractors’ workmen would permit. (The political battles at Harrisburg was nothing as compared to some of the fistic battles between different gangs under the early contractors). It is 81 years tonight since the promoters of the Pennsylvania in Philadelphia learned that Governor Shunk had issued letters patent authorizing the chartering of their company. The stockholders held an election of directors and the company was organized March 31, 1847. Samuel Baughn Merrick was the first president. The first chief engineer was John Edgar Thomson, a name since familiar in Pittsburgh and a surname linked for more than half a century in the traditions of the Pennsylvania system. Work was begun over the various stretches from 15 to 20 miles from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh, and while the old locomotive “Salem” was shunted off the canal boat to go into service on the Ohio & Pennsylvania, the contractors were making the dirt fly on the Pennsylvania Central between Pittsburgh and Turtle Creek, and on December 10th, of that year (1851) the road from Pittsburgh to Turtle Creek was opened.

There was still a gap of 25 miles, between Turtle Creek and Beatty’s, which was operated by stage and wagon lines. At the close of 1851 the route over which the Pennsylvania Railroad Company conducted its business consisted of seven separate and distinct portions, as follows:

- Philadelphia to Dillersville, via Philadelphia and Columbus Railroad.
- Dillersville to Harrisburg, via Harrisburg, Portsmouth, Mt. Joy and Lancaster Railroad.
- Harrisburg to Conemaugh, via Allegheny Portage Railroad.
Conemaugh to Beatty’s, via Pennsylvania Railroad. Beatty’s to Turtle Creek, via Stage and wagons. Turtle Creek to Pittsburgh, via Pennsylvania Railroad. During the following year the links were closed up and on the evening of November 29th, 1852, the first passengers to travel on all-rail line from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh arrived in the Pennsylvania depot. The newspapers which chronicled this event on the following morning carried, in what was then very bold type, the following announcement:

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD.
Staging Entirely Avoided.

On and after this day, December 1st, the Fast Express Mail Train will leave the depot, on Liberty street above the canal bridge, every morning at 3 o’clock, stopping only at Irwin’s, Hillside, Blairsville, Johnstown, Summit, Hollidaysburg, Altoona, Tyrone, Spruce Creek, Huntingdon, McVeytown, Lewistown, Mifflin, Harrisburg and Lancaster, arriving at Philadelphia or Baltimore at 10:30 on the same evening connecting at Harrisburg with mail trains direct for Baltimore. The second mail train will leave the depot every morning at 11:45 stopping at all the regular stations on the road and connecting at Harrisburg with the train for Baltimore. Time through to Philadelphia, 22 hours. Fare, either place, $9.50.

But don’t forget the Baltimore & Ohio. The same papers carried in even bolder type this announcement:

FARE REDUCED.

West Newton Plank Road Route.

For Baltimore, Philadelphia and Washington City.

This is the only office which insures a through ticket to Washington, and, by taking this route passengers will save time and money. The mail boat (carrying the United States Mail) leaves Monongahela wharf, above the wire bridge every afternoon at 5 o’clock via the Youghiogheny river. Passengers will lodge on the boat and will take the splendid U. S. Mail coaches at West Newton next morning over the plank road crossing the mountains by daylight. Take the magnificent sleeping cars of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad at Cumberland at 10 o’clock P. M. breakfast at Baltimore, and Washington, dinner in Philadelphia and arrive in New York the same evening. Fare, Baltimore $8; Washington $3.50; Philadelphia, $9.75.

The agent of the Baltimore & Ohio, J. J. Evans, whose office was in the Monongahela House, offered an alternative route on the boat leaving at 8 o’clock in the morning
for Brownsville, thence by stage over the National road to Cumberland by night, leaving on a train at 8 o'clock in the morning for Baltimore and arriving there, as he expressed it, "in time for supper."

The passenger agent of the Ohio & Pennsylvania "was on the job" with this intelligence:

**OHIO & PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD.**

To Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Toledo, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, &c., &c.

Express train for Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati leaves Pittsburgh at 12:30 P. M. Reach Alliance at 4 P. M., Cleveland at 7 P. M. and Cincinnati at 8:30 A. M.

Travelers for the west by rail were obliged to transfer from the Pennsylvania depot to the Ohio & Pennsylvania by omnibuses. The Pennsylvania Railroad Company at an early period subscribed for stock in the Ohio & Pennsylvania an amount deemed sufficient to pay for the construction of a bridge over the Allegheny river for the two roads. The bridge was completed in 1856 and the western road was reorganized under the corporate name of the Pittsburgh, Ft. Wayne & Chicago, but when it came to laying tracks across Penn street the municipal authorities raised an objection. This was the first serious clash between railroads and the peoples' representatives in Pittsburgh. Later this became a favorite indoor sport, if you please, of city solons. The word "graft" was not in the nomenclature of city governments or of transportation companies in those days, but the things that graft stood for were in the hearts of some men. Be that as it may,—and the city probably had good reason for holding up the activity of a railroad now and then—all obstacles to the passage of the tracks at Penn street eventually were overcome, and in March 1858, trains passed through east and west without change.

At this time the depot was a temporary station which was used pending the erection of a union station where all trains of the Pennsylvania system could arrive and depart at the greatest convenience. Liberty street east of the Pittsburgh, Ft. Wayne & Chicago was entirely too narrow for traffic and it was necessary to obtain the right of way on the south side of Liberty street extending be-
yond Seventeenth Street. This required legislation and legislation meant delay—in this case for several years. The grading and erection of masonry along Liberty street and the excavation for the new station was commenced in the spring of 1863, but the approach of the Confederate armies in Pennsylvania and the enforcement of the draft caused a labor shortage which interfered with the progress of the work and the station, a four-story structure, was not completed until 1865. This building was destroyed by fire in the railroad riots July 21st, 1877. It was rebuilt two stories high and stood until dismantled for the present Union Station in 1900.

The Pennsylvania system grew apace. As early as April 4th, 1837, a charter was granted for the Pittsburgh, Kittanning & Warren Railroad Company. The name was afterward changed to the Allegheny Valley Railroad Company and it went through a bitter controversy regarding the right of counties and municipalities to subscribe for the stock of transportation companies. This argument was at its height when the Pennsylvania was opened. Ground for the Allegheny valley was broken in Pittsburgh on St. Patrick's Day morning, 1853, and in less than three years the line was opened to Kittanning. For 20 years it has been in the Pennsylvania family. The Pittsburgh and Steubenville and the Chartiers Valley Railroad to Washington, Pa., were projected in the Civil war time. These roads with the Steubenville and Indiana eventually were given a place on the Pennsylvania's map as the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati & St. Louis. Another early link in the Pennsylvania system was the Cleveland & Pittsburgh. The Pittsburgh, Virginia & Charleston gave the Pennsylvania an outlet into the Monongahela Valley and now operates as the Monongahela division.

The oldest train in the world is the Pennsylvania's Fast Line. It made its first trip on December 1st, 1852, and has been running continuously ever since, missing perhaps a few trips in the strike of '77 and tied up in 1889 on account of the Johnstown flood and getting lost in the snow in the winter of 1899-1900 and again in the snow-drifts in 1908, but in those 68 years it has covered in its run between Pittsburgh and New York, 10,928,280 miles. If the Pennsylvania had a celestial right-of-way this would
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mean more than 13 round trips to the moon. (Note—The name of the “Fast Line” recently has been changed.)

Despite the cold deal given the Baltimore & Ohio advocates in Harrisburg in 1847 that line was right on the heels of its successful adversary. It pushed through to Wheeling and on the route of the Pittsburgh & Connellsville entered Pittsburgh throwing the Youghiogheny river packet and the West Newton stage coaches into the discard. Its Pittsburgh & Wheeling division in 1884 gave Pittsburgh a new line to Columbus and Cincinnati and its affiliation with the Pittsburgh & Western opened up another trunk line to Chicago. It was the Baltimore & Ohio that first gave dignity to the short-ride excursion business by opening up to the dwellers of Pittsburgh the scenic beauties of Ohio Pyle.

The Pittsburgh railroad that you don’t hear much about these days is the Little Sawmill Run. It boasted only one passenger coach and operated that on its northbound trips by the economic motive power of gravity. But the Little Sawmill Run road was important, not so much in itself, but what its success as a coal road led up to. It was built and financed by the “Economites,” those frugal German colonists who were guided over here by the venerable and pious Father Rapp. When they saw the star of success shine so brightly over their first venture between Temperanceville—now called the West End—and Banksville, they were encouraged to try again when plans were laid before them for a new railroad down the Ohio river on the south side of the stream to Beaver and thence on to Youngstown. The builders had a new trunk line to the Great Lakes in mind and they called it the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie. (1)

1. Since this paper was read before the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Miss Emilie McCreery, of 940 North Avenue, North Side, Pittsburgh, kindly submits the following amplification which I gladly add to my brief summary of the beginnings of the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad:

“Early in the year 1875, William McCreery, of this city, conceived the idea of a railroad from the South Side, along the southwesterly bank of the Ohio river, crossing at Beaver and following the Beaver and Mahoning rivers to Youngstown, Ohio.

“The preliminary investigation was made in conjunction with Mr. Charles A. Cooper, of the engineering firm of Edeburn & Cooper. To avoid suspicion Mr. McCreery and Mr. Cooper traversed the route on foot in the guise of hunters.
This road paralleled the Pittsburgh, Ft. Wayne & Chicago out of Pittsburgh and of course the Pennsylvania people shook their heads ominously saying that it would be a failure. A lot of far-seeing citizens of Pittsburgh, including Col. James M. Schoonmaker, thought otherwise and put their whole energy behind the project. A fight was nothing new for the colonel. When he was aged 21 he commanded a brigade of cavalry, and there are men still living who can testify that he always rode at the head of his men and came out of battle with blood on his sword. The battle for the Lake Erie was just a little different—there was gold on the swords lifted in its behalf. It was a success from the start, which was in 1879, and made more money per mile than any other railroad in America. Throughout its history there has been something of the dashing dare-devil about this road that distinguishes it among all the transportation enterprises in the country. To its original mileage to Youngstown, O., it added branches up the Monongahela and up Chartiers creek, tapping prodigious deposits of coal, and at the same time getting a great miscellaneous tonnage and a dividend-paying passenger traffic. The P. & L. E. is even a greater monument to the Economites than John Duss' band, but the band got the publicity.

In the "big money" days under the McKinley tariff when prosperity was riding a-horseback throughout the industrial districts of the country, and Mark Hanna's full-dinner pail propaganda was in full swing; when no newspaper editor had the courage to put his edition on the press without giving J. Pierpont Morgan and a new financial combination a head-line on the front page—well, in those days the Goulds looked longingly towards Pittsburgh. Their chief of scouts was "Joe" Ramsey, president of the Wabash. He looked into Pittsburgh, and naturally looked over the top of Mt. Washington. This was perfectly nat-

"As a result, Mr. McCreery applied for a charter for the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad which was granted on May 10th, 1875. By the articles of Association, William McCreery became president and retained that office until July 6th, 1877, being succeeded by Mr. James I. Bennett, a prominent Pittsburgh manufacturer.

"Under the presidency of Mr. McCreery, the groundwork of the project was largely laid and the first shovel of earth was turned at Beaver Falls May 10th, 1877."
ural. In his younger days he had built a narrow-gauge road from Pittsburgh to "Little" Washington. His side-partner in this bit of deviltry was Col. T. P. Roberts, long distinguished as the dean of the United States Engineers, and it used to be said by some to be the "sole proprietor" of the Monongahela river. Ramsey and Roberts called their early road the Pittsburgh Southern. It was built over the hills and down into the hollows, around trees and barns, and thus looped-the-loop for 36 tedious miles through the southern townships of Allegheny county and just as tediously across the undulations of the northern townships of Washington county. It was ready for operation in 1878, and that is the date that every farmer along the line who put his money into the enterprise looked back to as the beginning of activities by the sheriff. The road broke up and so did the farmers. The demise came in 1884. There were few mourners and the Baltimore & Ohio took care of the corpse, being heir to the right of way from Finleyville to Washington, taking it over for its Wheeling division.

Ramsey's return in 1901 was hailed as a great story by the railroad editors of the Pittsburgh newspapers. I was one of the editors myself, and having known the now Wabash president when he was building the narrow gauge line, I introduced the fraternity. If all the newspaper clippings of the Wabash entrance to Pittsburgh were piled up together it would make a stack of wood pulp product higher than this historical society building. While the Goulds and the Wabash officials were being interviewed, the Pennsylvania people once again were ominously wagging their heads. I will not say jealous heads because this time the star of success was not visible in the Gould constellation. Pittsburgh councilmanic housecleaning had not then taken place and the stage was not properly set for the big railroad extravaganza which it was dreamed would be given here with all the old-time eclat.

Ramsey worked with super-human energy. In spite of all the obstacles he put the road into Pittsburgh. It was his greatest work. After 15 years the line is coming into its own in a manner that possibly Mr. Ramsey fore-saw away back 40 years ago. Pittsburgh is growing by leaps and bounds to the southward. Ten years from now the center of population of the city will not be on Herron Hill.
as it is today, but will move down across the Monongahela and take up its roost on the despised South Side. Then the Wabash will have a right of way right uptown and it will be seen that Joseph Ramsey, like Washington, will be a greater man in after generations than in his own. Peace to his memory!

The railroads needed Pittsburgh vastly more than Pittsburgh needed the railroads. Allegheny county citizens paid for bonds aggregating $1,800,000 which had been issued to purchase stock in railroads entering the city, namely the Ohio & Pennsylvania; Allegheny Valley Railroad, Pittsburgh & Steubenville, Chartiers Valley Railroad and the Pittsburgh & Connellsville. The great tonnage of the Pittsburgh district, which at the earliest period in railroad development was greater than America's trans-Atlantic trade, was a guarantee of success for the rail lines which would get a foothold here. The locomotive was in Pittsburgh before the railroads. The firm of McClurg, Wade & Company constructed the locomotive "Backwoodsman" and shipped it on the canal to a point on the Pennsylvania railroad years before that line opened its Pittsburgh connection. In Pittsburgh the railroads found mechanical geniuses who improved their motive power and rolling stock and two large plants for the erection of locomotives were soon built. When the railroads found the advantage of the steel rail they turned to Pittsburgh for their product, and soon Pittsburgh was supplying rails for railroads throughout the world. The airbrake, the block signal and the steel car are distinctly Pittsburgh products.

There was once inscribed upon a rock on the New England coast these prophetic words:

The eastern Nations sink, their glory ends
An empire rises where the sun descends.

Since that prophecy was made 300 years have passed away—eventful years in the world's history. Empires have risen, flourished and decayed; illustrious men have played their part in life's great drama and have vanished from the stage; dynasties have ruled and thrones have tottered, while we today view the vast perspective and witness in the modern era its tragedies and its triumphs. Its tragedies were political; its greatest triumphs have been in the fields of art and science, and none has been greater
than the triumph of transportation. Nowhere has transportation been signalized by greater achievement than here in the "Gateway to the West." When we take stock of all that has been accomplished, let us not forget that they were our own flesh and blood who were called back yonder to the shores of the continent of crumbling empires to build the railroads for that far-flung battle-line; that Pittsburgh engineers were among the first to carry Old Glory to the haunted fields of France. Without arms, but with the implements of science, they erected a bulwark for human liberty and assured us that the empire of freedom rises here where "the sun descends."
REVIEWS OF BOOKS


An authoritative work in historiography generally attracts attention. As stated in the preface, this book is put forth at the end of twenty years spent in collecting and editing materials dealing with the career of George Rogers Clark. The historical public, therefore, was awaiting the appearance of this book with high expectations, and it may be said at once that expectations have not been disappointed. No one in America was better fitted for this particular task.

Professor James asserts that at no time has he approached the study of George Rogers Clark "in an attitude of defense or of eulogy", a statement somewhat weakened by the additional remark that it has been his desire "to present a sympathetic interpretation of the personality of Clark and of his influence."

This biography is not of the recent psycho-analytical type seen in the writing of Gamaliel Bradford, Emil Ludwig, Audre Maurils and others. In some respects it is of the older and more conservative type. Its title might quite well have been The Life [and Times] of George Rogers Clark.

To the first twenty years of the life of Clark, only about ten pages are devoted. The next hundred pages deal with Indian wars, frontier settlement, and the general situation in the west from 1772 until 1777. Chapters VI, and VII narrate the dramatic story of Clark's occupation of Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes, and the recapture of the latter place in 1779. Thirteen chapters are then devoted to Clark's problems in the west during the Revolution, and the general history of settlement, Indian wars, and diplomacy, during the remainder of the century. The last eighteen years of Clark are included in a final chapter of sixteen pages. The book also contains five valuable appendixes dealing with Clark's Memoir, with his letter on the moundbuilders, his discussion of improved navigation, his testimony about Chief Logan's famous speech, and some of his correspondence with the French government.
After careful reading of these more than five hundred pages, the thought occurs to one interested in the history of the west, that Professor James might have rendered even more acceptable service to history by writing twice as much, in a two volume work. The materials handled and events treated seem to have justified an even larger work. Yet one is greatly impressed with the large amount of valuable history crowded into this one volume. In it one gets the story of the last three decades of the eighteenth century from the important perspective of the western frontier. The westward movement of settlers, Lord Dunmore's War, the Indian problem, the French population of the old Northwest, the policy of the British in the West, Spanish policy in Louisiana, politics and land speculation in the frontier, and financial difficulties during the Revolution are clarified in a story whose central thread is the dramatic conquests and striking career of George Rogers Clark.

To students of the history of Western Pennsylvania, this volume will prove of much value. In it will be found material bearing on Daniel Brodhead, John Connolly, William Crawford, Michael Cresap, John Gibson, Simon Girty, Alexander McKee, George Morgan, Arthur St. Clair, George Washington, and other figures of importance in local history. References in the footnotes and in the bibliography will be of service to those doing research in the history of Western Pennsylvania.

In friendly criticism of so valuable a volume, it might be said that the story of the Monongahela settlements is not adequately presented, while attention to other matters, such for instance as the battle of King's Mountain, borders upon serious digression. As minor defects, one notes a perplexing last sentence in a long quotation in fine print on page 351, and, also, what seems to be an incomplete sentence at the end of page 488.

But on the whole, this biography of the first great American hero of the Old Northwest, is well written. It is lucid and yet critical and authoritative. The volume is remarkably free from typographical errors. It is a credit to American historical endeavor and publication. It should find many readers among the members of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

Alfred P. James.

Temple Bodley has chosen to portray the life of a typical backwoodsman who through vision, energy, and ruggedness rose to a position of leadership in the pioneer life of the Middle Border. George Rogers Clark, a young, straight-limbed Virginian, of respectable but not aristocratic parents turned westward, as hundreds of other young men were doing, at a critical time in the history of the Ohio and Mississippi valley regions. Unlike the majority of his fellow immigrants, he realized the effect which the British posts of Vincennes, Kaskaskia, and Detroit, had upon westward migration through their control of the Indians, the fur trade, and the region itself. He received a commission from Governor Henry of Virginia and aid from that state to reduce those posts and early in the year, 1778, he left Pittsburgh enroute from Corn Island at the Falls of the Ohio River. Thence he proceeded in dangerous but heroic and successful campaigns against Vincennes, Kaskaskia, and again against Vincennes where he captured "Hairbuyer" Hamilton. The proposed campaign against Detroit never materialized, however, and thereafter Clark’s activities were comprised of Indian fighting, somewhat shady Spanish intrigues, and land surveying. The period from 1790 to the time of his death in 1818 was for Clark one of a general decadence of mind, of body, of spirit, and of popularity.

The author has had access to a great amount of original material of which he has made frequent use not only by way of reference but by actual incorporation into the content of the book. Perhaps too many lengthy quotations have been used (pp. 60-68, 81-90, 101-133). Such a practice leads the reader to wonder whether or not the sources had been well digested by the author. The layman finds them boresome and the scholar prefers to go to the original when he deals with sources. However, if a liberal use of source material makes for scholarliness, this work may be said to be scholarly. One gleans from reading this book that unfortunately "the relationship of the author to his subject is that of a lover to his mistress". Admittedly, the writer must be interested in his subject but not to the
extent that he is blinded to any shortcomings. The portrayal of Clark as a hero (p. 376), the contention that he never drank excessively prior to the Wabash expedition (p. 303), and the charge of malicious intentions launched against his contemporary critics seem overdrawn (p. 376) because Clark was a rough rugged pioneer, an Indian fighter, who certainly encountered both the democratizing and the brutalizing forces of the frontier. The author's treatment of Clark's decadence and intrigues with the Spanish governor makes them appear almost justifiable in contrast to the deeper plots of Wilkinson. In justification of the author it should be said, however, that the silence of eastern historians upon Clark's work in the west tends to make Bodley's praise appear thundrous. Likewise, the contention that Clark's campaigns procured that region for the United States appears overdrawn in view of the fact that the peace commissioners neglected to utilize his accomplishments to obtain the Mississippi as the western boundary. The American Continental Congress certainly failed to realize the strength which such a claim would have had. However, the fact that Clark opened the region for migration cannot be denied.

The book is valuable, nevertheless. It serves, along with other recent books, to bring to light a hidden phase of American history. The style is good. The continuity is unbroken. To one who has spent a life time in perusing documents pertaining to the history of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys there may be nothing new in the book, but the layman and even the majority of professional historians may find much of value in it. One student of that particular phase of history has found various inaccurate quotations in the book, but the writer of history must have both the conviction of his opinions and the courage to face a few errors, else little history will be written.

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