THE HISTORICAL TOUR OF 1933

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The unqualified success of the motor tour conducted by the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania and the summer session of the University of Pittsburgh from Pittsburgh to Erie in the summer of 1932 encouraged the sponsors to make a similar exploratory and missionary excursion this year, on July 14 and 15, through another part of western Pennsylvania. As before, historic sites were visited and luncheon and program meetings were held en route, with the objects of stimulating the interest both of the visitors and of their hosts in the historical backgrounds of the region and of bringing local agencies of similar purpose into closer working relations with the sponsors, whose spheres of interest are not limited to Pittsburgh and Allegheny County but include all of western Pennsylvania.

This year the tour was routed southward through Allegheny, Washington, and Greene counties in Pennsylvania, to Morgantown, West Virginia, the seat of West Virginia University and one of the centers of historical activity in the trans-Allegheny region. Approximately sixty people in a motorcade of some twenty automobiles traveled over the day and a half itinerary of nearly two hundred miles through a section rich in associations with the old Virginia-Pennsylvania boundary controversy, the Whiskey Insurrection, and Washington’s visits to the West; and considerably over two hundred people attended one or more of the meetings held at Washington, Waynesburg, and Morgantown. While in Pennsylvania the motorcade traveled with benefit of state police escort, thus avoiding delays normally caused by traffic lights, “stop” signs, and “one-way” streets, and in communities visited, both in Pennsylvania and in

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West Virginia, committees on local arrangements contributed largely to the comfort and enjoyment of the pilgrims and to the success of the undertaking as a whole.

The tourists assembled at the Historical Building early on Friday afternoon, July 14, and, forming a motorcade headed by the pilot car of Mr. Franklin F. Holbrook, curator of the society, set off in the direction of Woodville to the region where "the Neville connection" once dominated the Chartiers Valley. The first stop was made at old St. Luke's, a "real Church of England," the history of which was given briefly by Mr. Andrew G. Smith, president of the Chartiers Historical Society. The present stone building, it was explained, was erected in 1853 on the site of the original log church built about 1765; Major William Lea donated the land and General John Neville financed the parish for many years. Inside the church the attention of the visitors was directed particularly to the interesting organ that was "toted" on horseback over the mountains in 1800, the first one brought into the region, and among the old graves in the little churchyard outside was pointed out that of Jane Lea Nixon, first white child born in the Chartiers Valley.

After continuing their journey for a short distance, the travelers visited the interesting and charming house built in 1785 by General Neville and later occupied by his son, Colonel Presley Neville. It was in this log dwelling, since clapboarded and otherwise somewhat modernized, that the women of the Neville household took refuge before the attack on Bower Hill during the Whiskey Insurrection. Here the tourists were welcomed by Mrs. W. E. Wrenshall, the present occupant, who graciously opened for inspection the first floor with its fine collection of early furniture and other relics of the past. Most interesting to many were the window panes in the dining room, which had been "autographed" by the Neville children and their descendants since 1811.

Not far distant across the valley from the Presley Neville house and reached by circling through Bridgeville and approaching from the southeast was Bower Hill, the site of the famed Neville mansion. The party gathered near the old farmhouse now standing on the hill, which overlooks the Chartiers Valley, and Mr. Smith, after lauding the personality of General John Neville, the first western Pennsylvanian (except George Croghan) to build himself a great house in the Pittsburgh area, read por-
tions of his will illustrative of his character, and parts of Judge Wilkins’ description of Bower Hill. Accounts of the destruction of the mansion and of the death of Major McFarlane followed. Mr. Smith related that on July 17, 1794, an army of some five hundred insurgents who had assembled the night before at Couch’s Fort, a frontier blockhouse some miles distant, marched to this patrician stronghold of General Neville, who was inspector of excise for the western district, and demanded his surrender. In the conflict that followed one of the leaders, Major James McFarlane, was killed, and the “Whiskey Boys,” infuriated, set fire to the Neville house, which was entirely consumed. In concluding Mr. Smith said that the county now owned a fifty-five-acre tract including the Bower Hill site, which is to be developed in part as a soldiers’ burial ground and in part as a public park.

On scheduled time the caravan, like a great caterpillar, moved over the hills towards its next objective, Lobb’s Cemetery near West Elizabeth. Time did not permit stops along the way, but mimeographed schedules of the itinerary, with annotations by the pilot of the tour, served to guide the pilgrims and to explain briefly the points of interest. From the Bower Hill Road a turn was made through the stone gateway into the estate of Mr. Smith, which overlooks the Martin Jackson house erected in 1808. The motorcade entered Mt. Lebanon Park and rounded a loop by the Higbee School, a faithful restoration of a log schoolhouse built in the seventeen nineties; crossing to Washington Road in Mt. Lebanon and then to the Bethel Road, it went slowly past the site marked as that of Couch’s Fort, already mentioned, and past Bethel Presbyterian Church, one of the citadels of frontier Calvinism, dating back to 1783. The Reverend John Clark, pastor of the church in 1794, sought to dissuade the “Whiskey Boys” from the attack on Bower Hill—even though a part of his salary was paid in the form of Monongahela whiskey.

Between West Elizabeth and Elrama the tourists climbed a hill rising steeply from the highway, passed by the Virginia courthouse site on the top, and descended the far side a short distance into Lobb’s Cemetery. This interesting burial ground, dating from Revolutionary times, was recently restored and rededicated by the citizens of neighboring communities. Here is the tombstone of Andrew McFarlane, justice for the Pennsylvania court at Hannastown and brother of the ill-fated major
who fell at Bower Hill, and here also are the tombstones of Virginia soldiers in the army of occupation, victims of smallpox in 1795. Mr. Richard T. Wiley of Elizabeth spoke briefly about the associations of the place, then turned the attention of the party to the site at the top of the hill of the courthouse where from 1777 to 1780 Virginia exercised jurisdiction over what was then Yohogania County. Indeed, the references to the "Old Dominion" throughout the tour were constantly bringing to mind the Virginia-Pennsylvania land controversy. Before going down Mr. Wiley pointed out and explained the distant sites of the McFarlane home and of an encampment of Morgan's soldiers on the banks of the Monongahela.

After returning to the highway the travelers proceeded into Washington County. Near Elrama their attention was called to an old stone farmhouse standing on the site of the former log home of John Holcroft, reputed to have been the original "Tom the Tinker," pen name of the author of many warnings to farmers during the Whiskey Insurrection that the stills of those who paid the excise would be subject to "tinkering." The route led up Pollock's Hill, Washington County's high point commanding a view on clear days of the Monongahela Valley and Chestnut Ridge to the east, through Finleyville to Mingo.

At the Mingo Presbyterian Church the pilgrims were welcomed by the pastor and his wife, the Reverend and Mrs. R. Frank Getty. The party first assembled in the church, which was erected in 1831. The original "Mingo Creek Meeting House," the site of which is now occupied by the manse, was built in 1786. The history of the meeting house, storm center of the Whiskey Insurrection, was presented enthusiastically by Mr. Getty and by his senior elder, Mr. B. F. McVay. The visitors were then conducted through the church and were shown the chair used by the Reverend Samuel Ralston, its first pastor; the old communion benches; and prints of the Mingo Falls, of the old log church, and of Dr. Ralston. Some time was spent also at the fine old burial ground near the church where are buried Major McFarlane of Bower Hill fame, the Reverend Samuel Ralston, John Holcroft, and other noted persons. The attention of the visitors was called to the shade tree by the manse where Dr. McCook is supposed to have written The Latimers, novel of the Whiskey
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Insurrection; nearby are the Mingo Falls where John Latimer, hero of the novel, sought refuge from the soldiers of General Lee. Refreshed by the cool spring water offered by Mr. and Mrs. Getty, the party proceeded down the Mingo Valley to Monongahela and from that place over the scenic hills of Washington County to the county seat. Here preparations were made for an overnight stay at the George Washington Hotel.

The evening meeting at Washington found a large assemblage in the ballroom, where a banquet was held at which attractive programs were provided containing historical sketches of Washington and of its schools and old houses. The invocation was delivered by the Reverend Arthur A. Hays of Chicago, formerly a professor at Washington and Jefferson College. After the rendition of various selections by a piano trio, the Honorable J. Boyd Crumrine, president judge of the Orphans’ Court of Washington County and president of the local chamber of commerce, called the meeting to order and introduced the Honorable Henry W. Temple, former United States congressman, who welcomed the visitors. The response was made by Dr. Solon J. Buck, director of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. The formal program included two papers: “Some Reminders of the Whiskey Insurrection,” by Mr. Wiley; and a scholarly address, printed in full elsewhere in this issue of the magazine, on “The Significance of Western Pennsylvania in American History,” by Dr. Alfred P. James, professor of history in the University of Pittsburgh.³

Mr. Wiley recalled that 139 years previous almost to the day, in mid-July of 1794, the two major events of the outbreak occurred. The speaker made no attempt to narrate the tale of insurrection but discussed briefly the principal places and sites in Washington “and adjoining counties where the region was convulsed by these things.” He described the activity at the chief meeting places of the insurgents, including Mingo, Couch’s Fort, Whiskey Point at Monongahela (then Parkinson’s Ferry), Redstone Old Fort at Brownsville, the Black Horse Tavern at Canonsburg, and the town of Braddock. He mentioned also the cemeteries wherein were buried many of the participants in the conflict, such as Lobb’s, the old Smith burying ground at Elizabeth, the Mingo Church cemetery, and that of the Pigeon Creek Presbyterian Church; and the

³ It is printed post, p. 267-281.
sites on which stood the homes of many of the leaders in the insurrection, including those of Oliver Miller in Snowden Township, Allegheny County, of John Holcroft, of James and Andrew McFarlane, of David Hamilton on Ginger Hill, and of Benjamin Parkinson on the highway between Washington and Monongahela. Points of interest in Washington were noted, such as the home of David Bradford, insurrectionary leader, and the site, on the Washington and Jefferson College campus, of the encampment of General Lee's army of occupation during the winter of 1794. Mr. Wiley concluded his talk by tracing the routes of the right and left wings of the army.

After the evening meeting the tourists were conducted by Mr. Earle R. Forrest, an historian of Washington County, to the interesting collection of the county historical society, housed high in the massive edifice of the county seat. Followed a visit to Washington and Jefferson College, where all of the major buildings were open for inspection and the campus was brilliantly illuminated. Under the considerate guidance of Professor O. F. H. Burt, the party inspected the chapel with its interesting collection of portraits; the Thompson Memorial Library, where, in the Walker Memorial Room, is the fine private library of the late John Walker of Pittsburgh; the historical museum of the college; and the old colonial Administration Building with its historic traditions. The tired pilgrims closed the day's activities with visits to the nearby Washington Seminary on Maiden Street, founded in 1836 and reputed to be the oldest institution west of the Alleghenies for the education of women, and to the Lemoyne House, for many years the residence of Dr. Francis J. Lemoyne (1798-1897), outstanding citizen of Washington, noted for his varied activities in the interests of abolition, wool-growing, public libraries, and cremation.

Saturday morning found the motorcade on the way to Canonsburg, the oldest borough in Washington County. South of the town was noted the "Hill Church" (Chartiers Presbyterian), founded in 1776 by Dr. John McMillan. A stop was made in Canonsburg, at old Jefferson College, one of the forerunners of the present Washington and Jefferson College. After receiving the gracious welcome of local Daughters of the American Revolution, the tourists inspected the old college building, erected in 1830, its interesting historical museum, and the log cabin,
erected about 1780 by Dr. McMillan for his "classical academy." The story of the college and its picturesque founder was briefly outlined by Mr. D. M. Bennett, secretary of the Chartiers Historical Society, who pointed out that the Log College marks the beginning of higher education in western Pennsylvania. It stood originally on the farm of that famed apostle of Calvinism on the frontier, Dr. McMillan, who migrated from Ireland to western Pennsylvania, where his pastorate at the Chartiers Church drew the Scotch-Irish from the surrounding hills. Jefferson College, outgrowth of the Log College, chartered in 1802, received an endowment as early as 1791 from Colonel John Canon, for whom the town was afterwards named. The speaker drew attention to the unpopularity of General George Washington in this region, due partly to the eviction of the "squatters" from his lands near Canonsburg, and partly to the unwelcome "invasion" by the federal troops during the Whiskey Insurrection. To this day, it is said, parts of Washington County are strongly opposed to the forces in political life that trace their origin to the policies of Washington.

The caravan, increased by additional cars, continued over the "bottom-lands" in Washington County to the ruins of the David Reed House. Here, on September 20, 1784, George Washington dined and met the Scotch-Irish "seceders" who he claimed were squatting on the twenty-eight hundred odd acres acquired by him as a bonus from the Crown for services rendered during the French wars. But on July 15, 1933, only a contented cow chewing her cud was present to meet the visitors to the dilapidated log structure. Mr. Bennett gave a brief talk, commenting on the associations of the place. The travelers then returned through Hickory to Washington and were escorted past the site of another Virginia courthouse, the seat of Old Dominion government of the District of West Augusta in 1776 and of Yohogania County in 1776-77, to the Lemoyne Crematory, erected by Dr. Lemoyne in 1876. The Washington County Historical Society, in whose custody the building has been placed, presented each member of the party with a photograph and brief history of this place, the first crematory in the United States, last used in 1900. The travelers then resumed their trip over the beautiful hills of Greene County to Waynesburg.

4 A photograph of the log cabin is reproduced ante, 16:163 (August, 1933).
Dr. Arthur W. Mintier, professor of history at Waynesburg College, presided at the luncheon in the dining room of the Fort Jackson Hotel at Waynesburg. The tables were filled to capacity and an overflow had to be cared for in adjacent lunchrooms. To the welcome of the chairman responses were made by Dr. Buck, Mrs. R. E. Brock, president of the Greene County Historical Society, and Miss Sara Dinsmore, regent of the John Corbly chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

The first formal address, “Indian Trails in Southwestern Pennsylvania,” was vividly presented by Dr. Paul R. Stewart, president of Waynesburg College. Dr. Stewart commented particularly on the Great Warrior Trail, an Indian thoroughfare crossing Greene County from east to west. This important Indian highway, ranking with the great Kittanning and Mohawk trails, crosses the Ohio and Monongahela rivers just below the mouths of Fish and Dunkard creeks respectively. Dr. Stewart pointed out, with the aid of maps distributed among his listeners, that the Indian always followed the ridge because of its commanding view, lesser vegetation, and protection from ambushes.

The Honorable Albert H. Sayers, president judge of the Greene County Court of Common Pleas, after reading a letter written in 1828 by Charles Carroll of Carrollton acknowledging his election to honorary membership in the literary society of Madison College at Uniontown, spoke on “Greene County in the Early Days.” According to the speaker, the region that is now Greene County was successively a part of Chester, Lancaster, Cumberland, Bedford, Westmoreland, and Washington counties. It was finally formed into a separate county in 1796. Judge Sayers discussed several phases of its history, including early settlement, the early distribution and ownership of land, and the derivation of place-names, and related many incidents of pioneer life, rendered hazardous in this region by frequent Indian depredations.

At the conclusion of the address, Dr. Charles H. Ambler, professor of history in West Virginia University, was introduced and informed those assembled of the revocation of the permit to visit “Friendship Hill,” the principal feature of the afternoon program. Disappointing as this sudden and unavoidable change was to many who had joined the tour expressly for the purpose of visiting Albert Gallatin’s home at New Geneva, the party proceeded to Morgantown. Before leaving Waynesburg, a visit
was made to the valuable and extensive museum collection of the Greene County Historical Society, which, when displayed in more commodious quarters, should fascinate and attract many visitors. Of most interest to many were a model of Fort Jackson and a cross section of a grave of an Indian child. In East Waynesburg the site of Fort Jackson, erected by settlers in 1774 as a defense against the Indians, was pointed out by Dr. Stewart. Moving on, the motorcade crossed the Great Warrior Trail, of particular interest to the tourists in view of Dr. Stewart's remarks earlier in the afternoon, and, after crossing the Mason-Dixon line, traveled along the green Monongahela to where Morgantown nestles picturesquely in the mountains.

Dr. Ambler led the procession through Morgantown past the university campus to the top of a hill a few miles northeast of the town, where the party halted at the Pierpont marker, which commemorates, among other things, the route of Washington's return from his trip to the West in 1784, already mentioned in connection with his visit to the Reed house near Canonsburg. While the tourists grouped themselves around the marker, representatives of the Beales family of pioneers told interesting anecdotes of the region and of its associations with Tecumseh. The motorcade then moved on through beautiful mountainous country to Lake Lynn, or Cheat Lake, remarkable for its scenic beauty. The return to Morgantown was made by the same route.

Members of the university faculty and many residents of Morgantown joined the visitors at the Hotel Morgan on Saturday evening for the final meeting of the tour. Following the invocation, which was delivered by Professor O. P. Chitwood of the history department of West Virginia University, the chairman, Mr. Frank P. Weaver, president of the Monongalia County Historical Society, welcomed the visitors to Morgantown, referring to this region as the "Alsace-Lorraine" of Pennsylvania and Virginia and the "cradle of the steel industry." Dr. John W. Oliver, head of the department of history of the University of Pittsburgh, made the response, in which he emphasized the fact that "no state line should divide our historical interests."

Dr. Ambler, student of Washington's extensive western travels, then presented an interesting address on "Washington and Braddock," in which he recounted the story of the famed Braddock campaign with spe-
cial emphasis on the friendly relations of Braddock and Washington. The speaker indicated that, contrary to popular conception, the veteran general of European frontiers sought and found counsel in the young colonel of Virginia, and that there was almost a filial regard in the attitude of Washington towards Braddock. Washington's letters and the reports of his actions during the march to Fort Duquesne and at the scene of rout, reveal his devotion to his superior. When the famous rout occurred, Washington, sick but still possessed of great driving power, proved as great a hero in defeat as he later did in victory.

The closing address on “The University of Texas and the Collection of Historical Materials,” delivered by Dr. Charles W. Ramsdell, professor of history in the University of Texas, was a revelation of what can be accomplished when adequate funds and workers are available. Interest in the work, said Dr. Ramsdell, was stimulated by studies made in a seminar in Texas history and was given impetus by the university’s acquisition of the voluminous Bexar Collection of official records of the province of Texas. Dr. Ramsdell then told of the interesting but sometimes difficult experiences encountered in obtaining historical materials and described some of the more valuable collections acquired by the university, such as the records of the veterans of Texas wars, the famous Austin Papers, the Mexican archives, and the Littlefield collection of materials relating to Confederate history. He explained that sectionalism is an important consideration in the work of the staff members assigned to local research, pointing out that East Texas is plantation country; South Texas is Mexican; and West Texas is distinctly “western.” In closing he remarked that there are so many distinct aspects of Texas history that the fields for research are varied and extensive.

The dinner in Morgantown marked the end of the official tour, the success of which fully demonstrates the advantages of this method of historical observation and study. The significance of the upper Ohio Valley in American history, particularly south of the Ohio and west of the Monongahela rivers, was indelibly impressed on those who participated in this second historical tour, and the two-day “peripatetic seminar” over two hundred miles of interesting and beautiful country will long be remembered by the voyageurs.