ANDREW MONTOUR AND HIS PORTRAIT
CHARLES MORSE STOTZ

The historian who seeks to enliven his writings with portraits of distinguished characters of the past usually finds himself with a poor choice of copy, or none at all. General Forbes and Braddock are seen to great disadvantage; that gem of incorruptible character, Colonel Henry Bouquet, must certainly have been vastly more impressive than he appears in the only likeness available. For the lesser known personalities one generally seeks in vain for any recorded likeness and there would almost certainly be no portrait extant of those who lived in the eighteenth century in the western wilderness.

Such was the case of Andrew Montour who faithfully served, through a full lifetime, the British-American cause. This Indian agent and interpreter, with one-fourth French and three-fourths Indian blood, was born in 1720 and died in 1772. The pages of local history contain intriguing records of his picturesque character and activities; what is more important, they give us two graphic descriptions of Montour's personal appearance. From this fortunate circumstance, a synthetic portrait has been made, possibly for the first time, of a person who had much to do with the establishment of the white man's civilization in western Pennsylvania. This is the story.

As the architect for the recently completed Montour High School, I mentioned at the dedication ceremonies that, having been born and raised less than four miles from the site of the building, I had many sentimental associations with the countryside and its people. In early days the rolling wooded landscape was featured by farms and coal mines with few built-up areas. The country seemed very remote. As a boy my favorite swimming hole was in Montour Creek just above Beaver Grade Road. The Montour Railroad ran close by. The name Montour was then only a pleasant word. But in the intervening years I had learned the origin of the name and was most

"Mr. Stotz is an architect by profession, and a historian by avocation. He has written books on early architecture of this area, and his work for the Bicentennial on Fort Pitt and fort building at the period, is already a classic." George Swetnam, Pittsburgh Press, February 19, 1961.—Ed.
intrigued when the school was named for Andrew Montour. I supplemented my sketchy knowledge of the man with a little research from which emerged a vivid personality. I continued with a few comments on his family and his career, after expressing regret that as far as I knew no pictures of Andrew Montour remain to be framed and hung in the school named for him. In closing I quoted in full the two descriptions of his appearance as they have come down to us.

Montour was described when a young man in his early twenties by the Moravian missionary, Count von Zinzendorf, who was visiting Andrew's home at Shamokin, modern Sunbury. "Andrew's cast of countenance is decidedly European, and had not his face been encircled with a broad band of paint, applied with bear's fat, I would have certainly taken him for one. He wore a broadcloth coat, a scarlet damaskan lappel-waistcoat, breeches, over which his shirt hung, a black Cordovan neckerchief, decked with silver bugles, shoes and stockings, and a hat. His ears were hung with pendants of brass and other wires plaited together like the handle of a basket. He was very cordial, but on my addressing him in French, he, to my surprise, replied in English." 1

A later description is yet more bizarre but tells us more of the man. "His forehead was painted bright red, great earrings of twisted brass rope, bracelets, necklaces, strange assortment of bright colored clothes, speaking perfect English, French and six Indian languages, soft spoken and pleasant, perfectly fearless, with marvelous endurance, great tact, the gift of leadership, a chief and counsellor of the Iroquois, trusted with the most important missions by them." 2 We here learn that Montour was a Seneca chief.

It seemed to me a wonderful idea thus to preserve in the name of this building the memory of a person who played a genuine role in the founding of our civilization. Being of mixed blood, he was a tie between the original owners of the land, the Indians, and the white men who succeeded to it.

Apparently there were few in the audience that night who had associated the local place-name Montour with a real historical personage. Several persons indicated interest in the remarks about Montour, including William Hopwood, the principal speaker of the

evening, who recalled my regret that there was no picture of Montour to hang in the building named for him. We discussed the matter on several occasions and decided to have a portrait made from the two descriptions which I had given in my talk. We commissioned T. Ward Hunter, noted Pittsburgh artist, to paint a conjectural life-size portrait. Hunter was chosen because of his extensive research in contemporary dress, firearms, racial Indian characteristics and other knowledge which he had applied in his distinguished illustrations of historical works.

We believe the picture to be as faithful a likeness as may be managed through research and study. The method used is similar to police techniques where a fugitive's likeness is made up synthetically from witnesses' memories of age, features, coloration, clothing, posture and the like.

The completed portrait was presented on February 18, 1961, to the people of the Montour School District and permanently installed in the high school building as the joint gift of William Hopwood, Charles and Edward Stotz. The painting is dedicated to the late David E. Williams, former supervising principal and for many years associated with Charles M. and Edward Stotz in their design of school buildings in Kennedy Township as well as the Montour Joint High School in Robinson Township, in which the painting hangs. Williams will long be remembered for his devotion to the improvement of education as well as the school buildings in his community.

Much has been written about Andrew and his equally distinguished mother, Madame Montour. We propose here to comment briefly about Andrew Montour, the man, his stature as an agent and interpreter for the British and early American leaders, and the picturesque but perilous conditions in which he lived.

In his lifetime Andrew Montour roamed over the wilderness from New York to South Carolina and from the Illinois country to the white men's cities in the east. He was known as a trader and woodsman but chiefly as an interpreter and Indian agent. He was loyal to the white man's cause, giving information of the movements of the hostile French and Indians during the wars from 1754 to 1765. He was with Braddock's army and was an interpreter for George Washington at Fort Necessity. He aided in recruiting soldiers and Indians for the armies of the British. Robert Dinwiddie, Governor of Virginia, once conferred upon him the rank of captain. Montour died about 1772 and was buried on what was then known as Mon-
tour's Island, now probably Davis Island, about four miles below Pittsburgh on the Ohio River.

The presence of the white man, from the start, raised serious concern among the Indians. As time went on the intelligent Indian realized that the ownership of his lands and hunting grounds was threatened and, finally, that his very existence was in jeopardy. The duties of the agent or interpreter who stood between the Indian and the white man became more and more hazardous as the drama unfolded. The spirit and accuracy of his translations in the routine delivery of messages, and especially in critical treaty sessions, put a great tax on the interpreter's tact and loyalty. He had to be versed in woodcraft, subsistence in the wilderness and knowledge of overland and water routes. He must be able to defend himself and possess the physical stamina to travel great distances and to endure hardship. Even when the Indian agent was of proven honesty, the quality of his judgment and advice to his white superiors might determine the success or failure of a costly military expedition.

In all of these respects Andrew Montour, or Sattelihu, as he was known to the Indians, appeared to measure well. Many Indian go-betweens are mentioned in the military annals but none had a longer and more honorable career of faithful service to the white man's cause. These were trying times, when loyalties faltered and weaker hearts succumbed to bribery and betrayal. This is not to say that Montour was without his human weaknesses. Occasionally he shared the Indian's intemperate use of liquor. Sometimes the effect was ludicrous as when James Kenny, the Quaker storekeeper at Fort Pitt, in writing about rum, said that "Andrew Montour loves it too . . . he thanked Beaver King for his speech, which made ye Indians laugh so hearty, that some of ye young men could hardly stop." 3

On another occasion, when traveling to Aughwick, Montour became intoxicated several times with results even less edifying. He abused Governor Hamilton for not paying him for his trouble and expenses. Conrad Weiser, Pennsylvania's Indian ambassador, reprimanded him when sober, and he begged Weiser's pardon and desired him not to mention the matter to the Governor. "I left him drunk at Aughwick," said Weiser; "on one leg he had a stocking and no shoe; on the other, a shoe and no stocking. From six of the clock till past nine, I begged him to go with me but to no purpose.

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3 The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XXXVII, 429.
ANDREW MONTOUR (1720-1772)
Seneca Chief and Interpreter

A likeness suggested by contemporary descriptions.
He swore terrible when he saw me mount my horse." On Weiser's way home Montour met him at Carlisle, having arrived there the day before. He again begged Weiser's pardon, and left for Virginia. At another time Montour was detained in Carlisle for a tavern debt and it was reported that he had lost all his dispatches.

Life on the frontier wilderness was crude; such behavior was not exceptional. As a matter of fact the Indians of the Six Nations valued Andrew Montour highly and warned the other Indian nations that if any should be responsible for his death, war would be declared. At the treaty with the Pennsylvania Commissioners held in Carlisle in October of 1753 Andrew Montour was in attendance. Toward the close of the conference Scarouady, Oneida chief, presented a large belt of wampum to Montour, addressing the Pennsylvania Commissioners as follows: "Since we are now here together, with a great deal of pleasure, I must acquaint you that we have set a horn on Andrew Montour's head; and that you may believe what he says to be true between the Six Nations and you, they have made him one of their counsellors and a great man among them, and they love him dearly." The French recognized Montour as a worthy enemy; they placed £100 on his head.

George Croghan, the most celebrated of the Indian traders, was a colorful and shrewd person. In a letter which George Croghan wrote the Governor on June 10th, enclosing a journal of his and Montour's transactions at Logstown, he said: "Mr. Montour has exerted himself very much on this occasion, and as he is not only very capable of doing the business, but looked on amongst all the Indians as one of their chiefs, I hope your Honor will think him worth notice, as he has employed all his time in the business of this Government." When Conrad Weiser recommended Andrew to the Council of the Pennsylvania Government for employment as interpreter or messenger, he said that he had found him "faithful, knowing, and prudent."

Montour, in his time, knew and dealt with practically all important Indian chiefs as well as the leading military and political leaders among the white men. He was known to all the traders, scouts and missionaries. He was, as mentioned above, with Washington at Fort Necessity and traveled with Braddock's and Forbes' armies. The English, much less deft than the French in their Indian

4 C. Hale Sipe, The Indian Chiefs of Pennsylvania, 316.
5 Ibid., 314-315.
6 Ibid., 314.
relations, owed much to Montour. He saw the fateful struggle from relatively neutral ground. What a story he could have told!

The origin of Montour and his famous mother, "Madam Montour," is well told by John P. Penny, Jr's Madam Montour.7 Andrew's mother, Madame Catherine Montour, was born about 1680. She was the daughter of a Frenchman named Montour and a Canadian Indian squaw. She was captured at the age of ten, raised among the Iroquois in New York State, and became the wife of two successive husbands, both Seneca chiefs. She raised her children in the Catholic faith, taught them French and English as well as the Indian tongues and was regarded by the white people as a woman of intelligence and breeding. She established herself as an interpreter of importance.

She was held in high regard by her own people, and her sympathy was always on the English side where the French were concerned. She attracted the attention of Governor Penn and soon won the confidence of the English. As interpreters were rarely trusted by both sides, she became very valuable, and appears in the records of all great council meetings in New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Her influence was always for peace and proper understanding between the Iroquois and the English. "She constantly travelled the great forest from Albany to Williamsburg, Philadelphia to Fort Pitt where she spent most of her time. Her last journey at eighty years of age, and blind, was on a horse led by her son, Andrew, from Fort Pitt to Venango, [now] Franklin, Pennsylvania, which was the last record she left." 8

"Her son, Andrew, died in 1775. Their lives covered ninety-five years, their service in the English cause seventy-five years. During that seventy-five years the French and English questions and the Indian problems were settled in Pennsylvania, and the war of Revolution was started." 9 "With the exception of General Washington and The Honorable Benjamin Franklin, no one of all the great men and women who helped to establish this country have the array of everlasting monuments bearing their names, this poor Indian woman has today. A mountain, a river, a creek, a great county, a town, a township and streets in three cities bear the name, Montour." 10 And now, a high school!

7 Penny, op. cit., WPHM, XIII, 55-58.
8 Ibid., 57.
9 Ibid., 56.
10 Ibid., 56.
In addition to references cited in the footnotes the following books were among those found to contain valuable material on Andrew Montour: Charles A. Hanna, *The Wilderness Trail*, 1911; *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*, edited by Frederick Webb Hodge, 1911; *Letters of General John Forbes*, compiled and edited by Alfred Procter James, 1938; *George Mercer Papers*, compiled and edited by Lois Mulkearn, 1954; *George Croghan's Journal of His Trip to Detroit in 1767*, edited by Howard H. Peckham, 1939; Albert T. Volwiler, *George Croghan and the Westward Movement, 1741-1782*; and Nicholas Wainwright, *George Croghan—Wilderness Diplomat*, 1959; *Colonial Records and Pennsylvania Archives*. 