

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

FOOTNOTES TO WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY

The Archives of this Society contain many documents from the Select and Common Councils of Pittsburgh in the days before the Civil War. Two of these we wish to share with our readers. More will follow from time to time.

To Councils June 26, 1834

Whereas the Select & Common Councils of the City of Pittsburgh have recently been informed of the death of the great & good "La Fayette." The gallant defender of Liberty, in the old and the new world — the bosom friend of Washington, the adopted American, whose Services in the cause of Liberty during the interesting and trying Struggle of our Revolution, whose long life devoted to the Amelioration of his Countrymen, whose constant purity of Character, blended with great Admiration and Attachment, for our institutions and laws, have united to hold him out to the world, as one of the best and greatest benefactors of the human family, and create in our minds a deep and sincere regret at the melancholy dispensation of Providence which has removed him from this sublunary Sphere to a better and more enduring glory in a heavenly one.

Therefore be it Resolved.

That deeply deploring the death of our distinguished fellow Citizen "General La Fayette" we desire to co-operate with the great body of the American people, in manifesting our feelings in a manner worthy the memory of one of the purest and most unsullied public Characters that ever passed thru the ordeal of public opinion.

Resolved. That the Presidents of the Select & Common Councils be requested to address a letter of condolence to the family of the late "General La Fayette" — expressing the deep sense of sorrow which pervades our whole community in consequence of the death of the last [*illegible*] General of our Revolution.

Resolved. That as a mark of respect for his memory, the members of the Select and Common Councils wear the usual badge of mourning for sixty days.

Resolved. That this resolution be published in the local papers of this city

Entered from the minutes

E. J. Roberts Clk.
Common Council
Wm. Pentland Clk.
Select Council

The Common Council read and adopted unanimously

The Select Council read and concurred in unanimously.

Dear Sir

Pittsburgh Penn^a 27 June 1834

The Citizens of Pittsburgh have received with infinite pain, intelligence of the death of Washington's friend and associate in the struggle of "76"

Participating in the feeling of sorrow manifested wherever the principles of Civil Liberty have found an advocate, the Select and Common Council of the City of Pittsburgh have assembled for the Special purpose of expressing publicly and officially, their deep sense of the loss which has been sustained by the friends of equal rights in every clime, and have instructed us in their behalf and in behalf of their Constituents to offer to the family of your illustrious parent their heartfelt sympathy and condolence.

In executing a trust so painful, yet so exalted, we cannot hope to purge the bitterness of domestic affliction; we cherish however the belief that it will be permitted to America's Sons freely to mingle tears of National Gratitude and affection with those of filial devotion.

Lafayette is no more! He, who, in both hemispheres in Revolutionary and in Independent America, and in France through all her changes, has ever been the constant and disinterested supporter of liberal principles and of free government, he whose brilliant career of public Service was joined with an elevation of private character always, "without fear and without reproach," has in the fullness of years left us. And as we believe, to meet those who, in a better world, now enjoy the reward of a well spent life.

The Spark of Mortality has indeed fled but there is left behind it that moral light, which for Ages to come will illumine the path of the patriot and Sage, and history never failing to do justice to the

virtuous deed, will treasure, and hold out as an enduring example to all nations, the story of Lafayette!

The proceedings of the Select and Common Council, authorizing this communication, we have herewith, the honour of enclosing, and beg you

Dear Sir for ourselves, and those we represent, to receive assurance of profound respect and consideration and permission to subscribe ourselves

Your most obt Sevts

T. B. Dallas

Pres. of the Select Council

Sam^l P. Darlington

Pres. of the Common Council

To

Col George Washington Lafayette
Paris

Four additional Schenley letters from the Torrance collection are printed herewith. These letters are interesting in that they not only show the breadth of Mrs. Schenley's business interests in Pittsburgh but also her concern for the welfare of the "good old City" and of her native land.

14 Princes Gate, (London)
Hyde Park
W

June 28th
'83

Dear Mr. Torrance—I have received the Atty account—w^h is a very satisfactory one—also y^r letter of May 31st—I suppose I must be satisfied with the decision of the Jury allowing me \$30,000 from the B & O Rr C^o ¹—but I thought it w^d be a higher figure when compared with the price paid by Jones & Laughlin!²—The 1st Bill of Ex—the 2nd of w^h you enclose—I rec^d on the 4th May—In reply to M^r Hunter's proposition will you be so good as to inform him I am not disposed to tie up any minerals that may be under those lands—in such a very indefinite manner—I am rather amused with the paragraph in the Pittsburg paper w^h announced the coming fête on the Schenley estate & that "M^{rs} Schenley had been written to" & "given consent etc"—it is the first I have heard of it!—I am very anxious to visit the old place again—but it is difficult to make up my mind to cross the Atlantic—my son now says he must go without me—

Y^{rs} very sincerely
Mary E. Schenley

June 1st
[1885]

14 Princes Gate, (London)
Hyde Park
W.

Dear M^r Torrance—I rec^d on Sat^r a bill of Exchange from Belmont

¹ Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company.

² The firm of Jones & Laughlin Company was established in 1854. In 1900 the firm of Jones and Laughlin absorbed the firm of Laughlin & Co., and became the Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation of today. (There are some discrepancies in the dates of organization in the sources consulted.)

for £ 2047 . . 2 . . 7—I also signed the “quit Deed” to Harbison & Walker³ & one to M^r Thompson w^h I sent by Post on Saturday—I am sorry to read of a great “*strike*” in Pittsburgh—I trust it will not be of long duration—My son has quite recovered from his severe attack of Rheumatic fever—with the exception of a little stiffness in his right arm.—

Believe me
Y^{rs} sincerely
Mary E. Schenley

July 3rd
[1885]

14 Princes Gate, (London)
Hyde Park
W.

Dear Mr Torrance—

I enclose the Deed to the Junction Re-Re C^o—If I could get \$10,000 for the Indiana Land I should be glad to sell it—I am happy to see only one Bank (Penn) has failed & trust business is improving again. I have not yet seen any one of my cousins who have left for Europe I have been in hopes they would be here for my daughter Agnes’ wedding,—I suppose they have all halted at Belfast with M^r & M^{rs} MacKnight where I hear they are to remain till 1st August—

Y^{rs} sincerely
Mary E. Schenley

Aug: 1st
[1885]

14 Princes Gate, (London)
Hyde Park.
W.

Dear M^r Torrance—I have to acknowledge rec^t of y.^r two letters—
June 20th & July 21st—at the same time with the letter I rec^d a bill of

³ Since July 1, 1902 the Harbison-Walker Company has been known as the Harbison-Walker Refractories Company.

Ex. from Belmont & C^o for £ 5144 3/8—I am sorry to hear business is still so dull in Pitts. but trust it will improve as the autumn returns—I sincerely trust the good old City will not be troubled with Cholera—they are taking the best steps to prevent its approach by cleaning up streets, alleys etc—as yet it has only appeared in Spain—the *most dirty* country in Europe—they have no idea of sanitation.—We have also had a great deal of hot weather this summer but the thermometer has never reached 90°—I regret to see the death of Gen^l Grant—but his sufferings must have been so great that his friends could scarcely wish his life to be prolonged. I hope to leave town in town in two days for “ 1. South Cliff
“Eastbourne
“Sussex”—
and return to London on 1st Oct.—

Y^{rs} sincerely
Mary E. Schenley

NOTICE

Since the completion of the Cumulative Index (Volumes 1-43), separate indexes to Volumes 44, 45 and 46 have been completed. These will be mailed to all library members and will be available to Society members upon written request.

