THE HISTORICAL TOUR OF 1953
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This, the twelfth annual tour conducted jointly by The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania and the University of Pittsburgh Summer Sessions, on Saturday, July 18, 1953, headed for the upper French Creek valley in commemoration of Washington’s journey to the French Fort Le Boeuf, at what is now Waterford, Pennsylvania, two hundred years ago.

The first stop was at Meadville, where about one hundred and fifty persons met at a luncheon meeting in Cochran Hall, Allegheny College. The presiding officer was Dr. Louis T. Benezet, president of the college, who welcomed the guests and introduced to them Charles A. McClintock, president of the historical society, who responded for the visitors; Dr. Sylvester K. Stevens of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; J. R. Shryock of Meadville; Dr. Arthur P. Coleman, president of Alliance College; Stanton Belfour; Edward Crump, Jr., a vice president of the historical society and presently constructing a men’s dormitory for Allegheny College; Philip H. Lantz, director of the historical society; a descendant in a family of early settlers of Meadville, one of whom, John Reynolds, Esq., was secretary of the group that met on June 20, 1815, to plan a college; Viers Adams of the University of Pittsburgh; Dr. Edwin P. Booth, the speaker at the evening meeting; Buell B. Whitehill, head of the Westmoreland-Fayette Historical Society; Joseph Riesenman, Jr., of Franklin; Dr. C. W. W. Elkin; Robert S. Bates of the Meadville Tribune-Republican; J. Alex Zehner of the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph; Dr. David Rial; Dr. John W. Oliver; and Judge W. Walter Braham of Lawrence County.

President Benezet then introduced the speaker of the meeting, Dr. Paul B. Cares, professor and head of the department of history at Allegheny College, who spoke on “The Heart of Allegheny College,” as follows:

In 1795 Major Roger Alden came to the small struggling frontier village of Meadville to be the agent for the Holland Land Company. Until 1805 Alden held this position, and then liked the community so well that he remained a resident until 1825. Major Alden became prominent in all local activities of Meadville. By his own words he had fought in the American Revolution from Lexington to Yorktown, yet the only scar of a wound that he bore was received in a duel fought on the banks of French Creek in 1804. He helped lay out the village, ran many surveys, planned roads, built a grist mill, and was active in all community undertakings. By 1814 this New Eng-
land son felt the need of better educational facilities for the community and began to urge the citizens to establish a collegiate institute. This idea fell upon fertile soil as there was an unusually large number of educated New Englanders among the early settlers of Meadville.

The idea of a college in Meadville was pleasant, but how could this small village find the man who would be willing and able to plan and operate a college in the wilderness? Roger Alden was confident that he knew a man who had the training and vision to make a pioneering college president. It was his cousin, Timothy Alden, who had graduated from Harvard University in 1794. At the time of his graduation he delivered his commencement oration in Syriac. Whereupon the president of Harvard demanded that, since he did not know a word of Syriac, young Alden immediately deliver his oration again in English before his degree would be conferred. Timothy Alden had been the pastor of churches in New Hampshire and Massachusetts, and had taught school in Newark, New Jersey, and New York City. In 1812 he had assisted Isaiah Thomas in the organization of the American Antiquarian Society. He was perhaps best known for two memorable sermons that had been later printed and widely circulated. One of these sermons was on the death of Washington, the other was entitled "The Glory of America." The latter sermon had been based upon a text from Isaiah 35:1: "The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." This verse from the Bible was to provide the motto of the future Allegheny College. Here was a man with the spiritual and intellectual background needed by the founder of a college in the early nineteenth century. There was another thing that recommended him to Major Alden. Timothy's wife had just inherited a comfortable legacy. The invitation was extended to Timothy by Roger. On April 24, 1815, Timothy Alden with his family arrived in Meadville after a strenuous journey from New York to Virginia, thence to Pittsburgh, and by the Allegheny River and French Creek to Meadville.

With the arrival of the scholar and prospective president of a college, enthusiasm grew rapidly in the small community. A meeting for the purpose of organizing a college was called for the evening of June 20, 1815, to be held in the log courthouse located on the west side of the Diamond, almost directly opposite the location of the present courthouse in Meadville. All the most prominent citizens were in attendance. It was with common consent that the man whose enthusiasm for a collegiate institute in Meadville had been greatest should be chosen to preside at the meeting. Roger Alden took the chair, and the affable and witty John Reynolds was made secretary. The decision to build a college in Meadville was quickly reached with no dissenting vote. It was also decided that evening to name the new school Alleghany, because its purpose was to serve the area that the Allegheny River and its tributaries drained.

The ideal of Allegheny was clearly enunciated at this meeting.

1 It is interesting to note that among the forty-seven original trustees of the college, Allegheny County was represented by James Ross, Henry Baldwin, and the Reverend Joseph Stockton.

2 This was the original spelling of the name of the college. The present spelling was adopted in 1833, when the college came under the auspices of the Pittsburgh Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.
It had always been the contention of Roger Alden that a liberal education was the answer to man's search for wisdom. The ideal of the new school as stated in this first meeting was to make the college a source of liberal education and not technical training. The type of education to be provided would stress the broad principles of human understanding, morality, and religion. Here was conceived the ideal, the spiritual heart, the soul of Allegheny.

Three things were immediately recognized as necessary and vital for the new college. The first was a charter from the state of Pennsylvania. This was secured on March 24, 1817. The second was students. The advantages of its location and the merits of its curriculum were soon made known to prospective students. Fees were announced as six dollars a quarter, room and board at one dollar and seventy-five cents per week, or room, board, and laundry at two dollars per week. The third necessity was funds. A subscription list was opened at the meeting in the Meadville courthouse which before the meeting was adjourned contained pledges for $4,635. This list was headed by the name of Roger Alden who pledged $500. Realizing that more financial support was necessary, the new college sent its new president, Timothy Alden, back to the East to solicit funds for Allegheny.

This journey was successful, but it was more fruitful in the promises of books than of money. Timothy Alden's enthusiasm for the new college expressed to his friends and former associates laid the foundations which resulted in the gifts of three very excellent libraries to Allegheny College. The first was the fine classical library of the Reverend William Bentley of Salem, Massachusetts. Harvard College had looked for and expected this alumnus of Harvard to present his library to his Alma Mater. But now it was destined for this school in the West. When Isaiah Thomas, one of the charter members of the trustees of Allegheny, went to take possession of Bentley's library for Allegheny, he was so impressed that he decided to send with it a personal selection of five hundred books from his own classical library. The third library to come to Allegheny was that of Judge James Winthrop of Cambridge, Massachusetts. This was one of the finest general private libraries in the country. In 1824, upon receipt of the first catalogue of the library of Allegheny College, Thomas Jefferson wrote to President Alden commenting upon the richness of the library and wishing that the University of Virginia, which he was then helping start, might have such a treasure house in fine books.

As the time approached for the books to arrive in Meadville the need for a home for the library became ever more apparent. The result was Bentley Hall. In an elaborate ceremony the cornerstone was laid on July 5, 1820. The building was to be erected by the contracting firm of Graworz and Lapsely of Erie for a bid of $8,450. The plan of the building was drawn to its last detail by Timothy Alden. His heart was in this building. It was to be 120 feet by 44 feet; the main section three stories high with two wings of two stories in height. Bentley Hall is a perfect example of the Greek revival type of architecture. In the subtle symmetry of its perfect art, in the pleasant harmony of simple ornament and line, one would travel far to find its equal. In this building, completed in 1827, is the physical heart of Allegheny College.

The young college had many difficulties and trials in its early years. Always it faced the problem of insufficient funds and often
a lack of students. For sixteen years the first president served without any salary whatsoever. In 1825 strong efforts were put forth to interest the Presbyterian Church in Allegheny. As the church was looking for a location for its Western Theological Seminary, the trustees of Allegheny thought that this might be the answer to their financial problems. Difficulties arose over the question of the seminary and the college each sharing a half of Bentley Hall, and the Presbyterians ended the argument by locating their new school at Pittsburgh's suburb of Allegheny, Pennsylvania. The need for money and students remained as pressing as ever. In 1829 plans were drawn up to turn Allegheny into a military academy. This would end the dream of both Roger and Timothy Alden for Allegheny as a college of the liberal arts. Only an argument between the trustees and proponents of the academy over a division of the costs of operation prevented Allegheny from embarking upon the experiment of a military college.

The inevitable day came in 1831 when Allegheny had no students and no funds. It must have been a sad day indeed for Timothy Alden when he locked the doors of Bentley Hall and turned the keys over to the trustees. For two years the college was closed. But the physical heart of Allegheny stood as a constant reminder of the spiritual heart of the institution. In 1833 Allegheny reopened under the auspices of the Pittsburgh Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Its future was now secure. Money was made available, and the Methodist ministers served as the recruiting agents of the college for students.

Time does not permit the telling of the story of the years of Allegheny down to the present, but two things remain certain. First, the beauty of the physical heart of Allegheny remains and around Bentley Hall revolves the college today. Second, the ideal, the spirit, the heart of the founding fathers of Allegheny still is the ideal of our administration and of our college today.

The second address of the luncheon meeting was given by the Honorable Herbert A. Mook, judge of the court of common pleas of Crawford County, of the class of 1929 at Allegheny. Judge Mook devoted the greater part of his address to the early settlement of the Crawford County region, using largely as his source of information John E. Reynolds' *In French Creek Valley*, and dealing successively with the mound builders, Indians, the French, and the early English and American settlers. Among these he referred to the Erie tribe (1650-55); Corn-planter's services to the settlers; the Half-King; the French under Cartier (1534 on); Champlain; Father Hennepin; Joncaire at Fort Machault; Celoron (1749-51); the building of the fort at Le Boeuf; and the later

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3 The next year Timothy Alden opened a girls' school in Cincinnati, and in 1834, the East Liberty Academy in Pittsburgh, but in 1835 he was supplying the Pine Creek Congregational Church in Sharpsburg. He died in 1839 and was buried beside his wife in the churchyard in Sharpsburg. In 1908 his body and that of his wife were removed to Greendale Cemetery in Meadville.
losses of the forts by the French. Colonel Daniel Brodhead went through the region in 1779. In 1787 David and John Mead came into the region and in 1788 settled on the west bank of French Creek, the next year moving to the east side and giving the place the name of Meadtown. John Reynolds and his son, William, were also early settlers and associated with the early history of Allegheny County. In 1800 Crawford County, heretofore part of Allegheny County was laid out. The Holland Land Company and its agents, Roger Alden and Harm Jan Huidekoper, played an important part in the land development of Meadville, and the home of the latter remains as the manufactory of the Westinghouse Corporation. David Mead laid out the town in 1804, reserving a part for public use now called The Diamond. Crawford County was named for Colonel William Crawford. In conclusion, Judge Mook displayed early pictures of Crawford County, maps of the townships, and portraits of the early settlers.

Following a visit to Bentley Hall and other buildings on the campus the motorcade moved on to Waterford. There, after viewing the Washington statue and the contents of the Judson House Museum, the group gathered on the lawn back of the museum where Vice President Crump presided and introduced Mrs. John Kuhns, past state regent of the Daughters of American Colonists, who were largely responsible for restoring the points and articles of interest at Waterford; Mrs. Cynthia Ensworth, who was the most active of the Daughters in the development of the Judson House Museum; Mrs. Helen Denny Howard of Waynesburg, past state regent; and Mrs. Helen Schluraff, present regent of the Fort Le Boeuf Chapter, of Erie, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Schluraff referred to the fact that the site of the fort was unnoticed until the Daughters purchased a lot across the street and later appealed to the national organization for help. Then, when the lot was cleared and walls were restored, the state legislature was persuaded to purchase the Judson property, and all is now under the supervision of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Among the many interesting exhibits in the Judson House are models of the early French and English forts in northwestern Pennsylvania.

Because of rain before the program got well under way, the group moved into the museum, where Dr. Oliver, a member of the state commission, introduced Lawrence S. Thurman, curator at Old Economy, one of the commission's principal charges. Speaking briefly, then, of the
significance of the present occasion, Dr. Oliver stressed the fact that this was but the first of a planned series of celebrations of the two hundredth anniversaries of events in the life of Washington, beginning with his historic visit to Le Boeuf in 1753.

Dr. Oliver then introduced Dr. Stevens, the state historian, who prefaced his remarks by recalling how he had first become specially interested in northwestern Pennsylvania history in 1937 when he found a local group of women working to preserve what was left and restore the site of Fort Le Boeuf. Here, he observed, began a series of events, 1753-1758, which determined whether the French or the English would rule over this region and, later, the whole North American continent. The conflict was not entirely local in its effect; these years of strife were ones of crisis for the English-speaking people. The French had a well-developed plan for world empire; they aimed to gain control of the fur trade and to connect the parts of their empire in Canada and Louisiana. Early in 1753 they built a fort at Presque Isle Bay (now in Erie). In the fall of 1753 they built Fort Le Boeuf. The next year they built Fort Machault, at the present Franklin, and Fort Duquesne at Pittsburgh. Around these forts grew a series of events, the outcome of which was determined largely on Pennsylvania soil. The building of the forts led to the world conflict known in America as the French and Indian War. It led to the ill-fated Braddock expedition of 1755, and to the successful Forbes expedition in 1758. In reviewing the more or less familiar facts about this series of events in some detail, Dr. Stevens reported the recent discovery of new evidence that the French had early recognized the importance of attempting thus to unite and consolidate their widely separated North American holdings.

Moving on to Cambridge Springs, the tourists met first in the gymnasium of Alliance College, where Mrs. Arthur P. Coleman, wife of the president, gave a lecture devoted largely to the work of Martha Walker Cook and her translation of Polish poetry. Following her address a brilliant interpretation of Polish music and dancing was given by students from various parts of the United States who were training to be leaders in music, art, and dancing. This exhibition, it was made plain, was given by the Polish Alliance organization and not by students of the college.

Following a dinner in Washington Hall, served by the young women students of the Alliance, and attended by about one hundred
and fifty persons, Mr. Belfour introduced various persons present, including Franklin F. Holbrook, editor of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine. President Coleman then welcomed the guests and recounted highlights of the history of Alliance College as follows:

Alliance College is happy indeed to welcome the twelfth Annual Historical Tour sponsored by The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania and by our good neighbors of the University of Pittsburgh Summer Sessions. In following the ancient route of George Washington from Pittsburgh to Fort Le Boeuf, now the fine little town of Waterford, our neighbor on the way to Erie, you have revived in your own minds the annals of our noble Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, its historic mission as the Gateway to the West.

As historians you are fully conversant with the contributions to our commonwealth made by the Pennsylvania Dutch, the Germans, the English, the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish, with others of the older immigrations. You are not so conversant with the contributions of the "New Americans."

And right here, ladies and gentlemen, Alliance College wishes to be of continuing service to you in your historical studies. After all, there is a sentimental link between Washington and these New Americans from the Old World, exemplified in the persons of General Casimir Pulaski and General Thaddeus Kosciuszko. The latter I am proud to say is especially dear to me, because my maternal grandmother was a Greene of Rhode Island and therefore, through General Nathaniel Greene, intimately connected with the two above-mentioned Polish staff officers of General George Washington.

After the days of Kosciuszko and Pulaski we had in America the so-called political immigration of the Poles, following their unsuccessful insurrections against Tsarism in 1830 and 1863. Then came the economic immigration of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which veritably has made Pennsylvania a second home for the Poles and other Slavic groups.

With the profound sociological phenomenon of the migration of peoples from central and eastern Europe to the United States, Alliance College is intimately bound, as the only free senior educational institution of higher learning in the world today that is supported by men and women of Polish lineage, while at the same time, uniquely among American colleges, it specializes in Poland and the Mid-Zone, their languages and culture.

Looking backwards through the years, in the eastern metropolis of this commonwealth, the City of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia, in the year 1880, a small group of earnest men and women from the plains of Poland signed a compact among themselves to found the Polish National Alliance which, this very day, with headquarters in Chicago, numbers 332,000 loyal Americans among its membership and possesses widespread financial resources.

Naturally enough, like our American fathers in New England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, our fellow citizens of the Polish National Alliance turned their eyes towards better educational advantages for their sons and daughters than they themselves had been able to enjoy back home under the oppressive rule of the partitioning powers, especially Russia.

Hence in 1912, with the participation of President William Howard Taft, Alliance College was founded on this hill of learning, using
the old Reider Hotel, which stood just in front of our gymnasium before it burned to the ground in 1932. The early history of Alliance College is indeed part of the educational history of this commonwealth, though unfortunately it has not yet been studied. It is therefore my earnest hope that some of you may be inspired to write a history of the Polish ethnic group in America and of Alliance College in particular. For this laudable objective we will give you every access to all possible sources of information.

The history of our institution, founded as the Polish National Alliance College but changed to Alliance College in 1931, will chronicle many glorious events, such as the visit in 1916 of Ignace Jan Paderewski whose historic speech on that occasion adorns our archives today.

In 1924 our original institution added a junior college and in 1946 its academy was discontinued. In 1948 the college became coeducational and was recognized as a degree-granting institution. In 1952 we obtained full national accreditation as a senior college.

As I said above, Alliance College now stands ready to contribute to these broad historical studies of the Polish, Slavic, and East European groups who, with the older immigrations, have contributed to the industrial supremacy of this commonwealth. The Alliance Journal has begun so to do. Through the years, we look forward to helping you historians chronicle the achievements in America of men and women, our fellow citizens, whose relatives suffer behind the cruel Iron Curtain today.

The final address of the day was given by Dr. Edwin P. Booth, professor of historical theology at Boston University, a native of Pittsburgh, an alumnus of Allegheny College, and a noted biographer and public speaker, who spoke on the subject, "George Washington and French Creek Valley." Among other things Dr. Booth vividly described Washington's early activities as a surveyor, his visit to the Bahamas for his health, his love affair and relation to Sally Fairfax, his physique, his dislike of farm life, his trip to the French fort, his later military career, his desire for retirement, his disregard of protection of health, and his death. The story was told dramatically and made a profound impression upon those present. Unfortunately for those not privileged to hear it, Dr. Booth's oration came straight from his mind and heart without benefit of manuscript.

After this, the crowning event of the day's pilgrimage—the best attended and perhaps the most enjoyable of all the joint tours—the visitors departed by routes of their own choosing, some to find overnight stopping places, others to push on, despite the lateness of the hour, to their homes in Pittsburgh or other far away places.