

Historical Society Notes and Footnotes

CONTRIBUTIONS BY PITTSBURGH SCHOLARS TO THE DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN HISTORY

A somewhat neglected reference work, of great value in American history, is the *Dictionary of American History** (5 vol. and Index Volume, Copyrighted 1940). Only a survey of the five volumes is necessary to reveal it as a work of considerable scholarship. Usually the articles or items are by specialists in the field or on the subject under consideration. This is in part due to the fact that lists of topics were widely circulated and scholars indicated the subjects on which they might write. The happy combination of subject and specialist must also have been based upon selection made by the editors as a result of wide acquaintance with American scholars or else careful research on their credentials.

Unfortunately the publication furnishes no index of authors and no table of articles. *The Index* (Volume VI), seemingly made by professional indexers, is an index of the context only. Highly important, as well as minor subjects, found in the various titles of articles, are wanting in the index volume. As claimed by the editors, the existing index is an excellent guide to additional references to facts mentioned in a given topic. But the researcher commonly is looking for something more than mere mention of a fact or thing.

In a recent survey of the 6425 articles written by more than a thousand different scholars, it appeared that individuals connected with Western Pennsylvania and more particularly with the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania and with the University of Pittsburgh are well represented in the *Dictionary of American History*. A reasonably careful canvass of the volumes showed that about fourteen of the thousand contributors were at one time or another connected with the two institutions mentioned.

The fourteen contributors furnished one hundred and nineteen articles or items, about one fifty-fourth of the total. Considering the size and population of the country and the number of its institutions, this is highly creditable. A detailed examination of the nearly six score articles has two values. First, it shows that specialized scholarship was known to exist here. Secondly, it furnishes proof that these scholars were both capable and active in the decade in which the *Dictionary* was assembled.

* In library of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

The variety of the topics, especially in regard to the upper Ohio Valley, is a matter of interest.

Alphabetically, the first by name of the fourteen contributors is that of J. Cutler Andrews, well known as a history teacher at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Chatham College, and the University of Pittsburgh. As the author of the history of one of the local newspapers, nothing was more natural than that he should contribute the item entitled, "*Pittsburgh Gazette*."

The second name is that of Leland D. Baldwin, one time official of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey, author in that decade, 1930-1940, of several books on the history of the upper Ohio Valley, and later librarian and professor of history at the University of Pittsburgh. As was most fitting, Baldwin's contributions are on topics and items found in his writings or in researches related to them. Organized alphabetically, as they are in the *Dictionary*, his list includes the titles: "Allegheny River"; "Arks"; "Bargemen"; "Bateau"; "Flatboatmen"; "Galley Boats on the Ohio"; "Keelboats"; "Mississippi River, Navigation on"; "Pirogue"; "Pittsburgh Resolutions"; "Rafting, Early"; "Raystown Path"; "River Navigation"; "Store Boats"; and "Whiskey Insurrection."

The third name is that of E. Douglas Branch, well known author, critic and book reviewer, who spent three years at the Historical Society in research upon transportation in western Pennsylvania. His eight contributions are entitled: "Bedford, Fort"; "Buffalo Trails"; "Forbes Expedition"; "Forbes Road"; "Grant's Hill, Battle of"; "Loudoun, Fort"; "Pack Trains," and "Redstone Old Fort."

Solon J. Buck is the fourth name on the list. Well known earlier as a researcher, author, archivist, editor and director of a historical society, he was for more than four years Director of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey, Director of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Editor of the *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, and part time Professor of History in the University of Pittsburgh. Although an authority on the history of Illinois, Minnesota and of the Granger Movement, and also a well known archivist, twenty-four of his twenty-six contributions to the *Dictionary* are upon western Pennsylvania items. The first two items are "Anti-Monopoly Parties"; and "Archives." Then follows items on, "Aughwick"; "Bouquet's Expedition"; "Braddock's Expedition"; "Braddock's Road"; "Bushy Run, Battle of"; "Donelson, Fort, Capture of"; "Duquesne, Fort"; "Erie Triangle"; "Gist, Christopher, Travels and Journals of"; "Gnadenhutten"; "Great

Meadows"; "Kittanning Campaign"; "Laurens, Fort"; "Le Boeuf, Fort, Washington's Mission to"; "Ligonier, Fort"; "Logstown"; "Machault, Fort"; "McIntosh, Fort, Treaties of"; "Monongahela, Battle of the"; "Ohio Company of Virginia"; "Pennsylvania-Virginia Boundary Dispute"; "Pickawillany" and "Proclamation of 1763." The preponderance here of Ohio Valley items is probably more than incidental, for Buck had thrown his full force into local historical activities.

The fifth local contributor was N. Andrew N. Cleven, a specialist in Hispanic (or Latin) American history. His two contributions, both in that field, are entitled, "Corwin-Doblado Treaty" (1862); and "McLane Ocampo Treaty" (1859).

Carroll R. Daugherty, in that decade a teacher of economics in the University of Pittsburgh, and an authority on labor problems as well as author of the leading text book on the subject, contributed an item on "Occupations, Changes in."

The seventh name alphabetically, is that of Randolph C. Downes who for five years was a research associate of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey and part time teacher of history in the University of Pittsburgh. For five years he worked on the history of the Indians in the Upper Ohio Valley and then published a notable book on the subject. His ten contributions to the *Dictionary* contain, therefore, the titles: "Easton, Treaty of" (1758); "Finney, Fort, The Treaty of" (1786); "Hannastown"; "Hannastown Resolution"; "Holston Treaty" (1791); Indian, The, in the Revolution"; "Land, Indian Conception of Ownership, of"; "Maumee Indian Convention" (1793); "Shawnee, The"; and "Shawnee and Delaware Migration to the Ohio Valley."

The eighth name is that of the late and much lamented Russell J. Ferguson, teacher of history in the University of Pittsburgh, Research Associate of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey for one year, student of the history of political parties, author of a volume on politics in early western Pennsylvania, and beloved adviser of graduate research students. An authority in the history of politics and of journalism, he also was imbedded in local, regional history and contributed a dozen articles with the respective titles: "French and Indian War"; "Illinois and Wabash Company"; "Insurrections, Domestic"; "Mississippi Company of Virginia" (1763); "Pitt, Fort"; "Pittsburgh, Indian Treaty at" (1775); "Presque Isle"; "Scotch-Irish"; "Sideling Hill"; "Western Land Schemes" (18th century); "Westsylvania"; and "Willing Expedition" (1778-79).

The ninth name is that of John W. Harpster, assistant in the Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey and compiler (and editor) of a volume of excerpts from diaries and journals of early days in the upper Ohio Valley and author of a volume on places and place names of western Pennsylvania. A part time teacher in the University of Pittsburgh, he, strangely enough but possibly because of his youthfulness, contributed only one item, entitled, "Wagoners of the Alleghenies."

The present writer's name is tenth on the list. His two main fields of historical research and writing were the Civil War and Western Pennsylvania. These two fields are in evidence in the titles of his contributions: "Alleghenies, Routes Across"; "Chancellorsville, Battle of"; "Confederate Congress"; "The Crater" (1764); "Commander in Chief of the British Forces"; "Cresap's War" (1774); "Leisure"; "Loyalhanna, Battle of" (1758) "Marin Expedition" (1753); "Mason and Dixon Line" (1763-1769); "Mingo Bottom"; "Mingos"; "Monongahela River"; "Monticello"; "Mosby's Rangers"; "Murderingtown"; "Nashville, Battle of" (1864); "Ohio, Forks of the"; "Partisan Bands"; "Piedmont Region"; "Potomac River"; "Rebel Yell"; "Richmond, Campaign against" (1864-65); "Richmond, The Burning and Evacuation of" (1865); "Tidewater"; "Trans-Appalachia"; "Venango"; "Washington, Pa."; and "Williamsburg, Battle of" (1862).

The name of John W. Oliver is eleventh on our list. Researcher and writer on military pensions, Head of the History Department of the University of Pittsburgh, Vice President and former Trustee of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, he taught and promoted studies in history of the American frontier, recent American History and the history of science and technology, in which last field he became the author of a standard textbook. His contributions are entitled: "American Legion"; "Bonus"; "Kossuth's Visit"; "National Tribune"; and "Pensions, The Arrears Pension Act" (1789). That he did not contribute a large number of articles on science and technology needs explanation. Probably relatively few such topics are treated historically in the *Dictionary*, and heavy duties probably limited his attention.

The twelfth name is that of Thomas Parran, who later came to Pittsburgh as Dean of the Graduate School of Public Health in the University of Pittsburgh. Appropriately enough his contribution to the *Dictionary* is entitled "Health, Public."

Number thirteen on our list is the name of Frank B. Sessa, in that decade assistant in the Western Pennsylvania Survey and part time

instructor in history at the University of Pittsburgh but later a teacher and librarian at the University of Miami, and recently librarian of the Public Library of Miami, Florida. His article is entitled "Pittsburgh."

The last name here of a contributor is that of Benjamin H. Williams. A teacher of political science with special attention to diplomacy and international relations, he was active in historical research and writing. His six contributions are entitled: "Briand-Kellogg Pact"; "Central American Court of Justice"; "Nonrecognition Policy"; "Philippine Independence"; "Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine"; and "Taft Commission."

Such an opportunity to make contributions may not come again soon. But it should be a matter of local pride and prestige that when the opportunity did arise it was met. And Pittsburgh institutions of learning and lore should keep ready to embrace all similar opportunities which may arise in the future. It is noteworthy that much of the research of the decade, 1930-1940, was subsidized. Here, in this *Dictionary of American History*, one finds evidence that subsidized research, whether full time or part time, can be depended upon to produce results in the social sciences as well as in the laboratory sciences.

ALFRED P. JAMES

FORT PITT DAY BOOK¹

A remarkable coincidence developed when our treasurer John Wilkins Robinson Creighton presented this society with the sheet of an old ledger, the first entries of which bore the date of July 6th 1765. Each side of the sheet was captioned "Fort Pitt" and carried the respective page numbers of 33 and 34.

The transactions, recorded on these pages, were written in clear script and were either entered in the name of the Delaware Indians or their representatives. Certain items were exchanged in barter while others were "for the use of the Crown." On one hand the articles listed included powder, knives, tin cups, brass wire, shirts, leggins, iron ladles, ruffled shirts, vermilion paint, etc., while on the other side the skins of small bear, summer and winter deer were mentioned.

The dates show that the entries were made only two years after

1. References: *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 1946. Vol. 29, page 80; *Ibid.*, page 141.

these same Delawares were associated with Pontiac in the siege of this very fort and in scalping hapless whites from here to Detroit. The bargains, here recorded, seemed to indicate an effort to win back the friendship of the Delawares.

The sheet or leaf was obviously of great interest and we planned to frame it, between glass, so that both sides could be read, but this had not yet been done.

Ten years prior to this gift or in 1946, a former Pittsburgher, Mr. L. M. Anderson presented the society with a book which had been carried to California by his father in 1873. It covered the transactions of a store conducted at Fort Pitt, supposedly by Baynton, Wharton and Morgan of Philadelphia, between March 1763 and November 1767. Its particular interest lay in the fact that it lists in trade, practically the entire population at or near the fort, two years after all structures beyond the fort had been destroyed in anticipation of Pontiac's attack. A quick check by our librarian, Miss Trimble, showed pages 33 and 34 were missing from this book. The prodigal, with a homing trait, characteristic of important historical documents, had returned to its city of origin and to its place in the book.

Investigation developed the fact that Mr. Creighton had no idea that the society owned the Fort Pitt Day Book and in fact he assumed that this was the sole surviving page of a book long since destroyed. He said the leaf had come down to him among the effects of his grandmother, Susan Pentland, who is the principal in Stephen Foster's famous song "Oh! Susanna." How she acquired this page is not known but we have some speculations.

The cover of the Day Book carries a sticker, now disintegrating but still decipherable in part. It once read "To be returned to Hon. Geo. Darsie or Geo. H. Anderson." Another small oval stamp has been superimposed which appears to read No. 81 Hon. Darsie." This seems to be a library number assigned to a book by George Darsie but the use of "Hon." suggests it was written by him.

The first historical society of Pittsburgh was organized January 16, 1834. It was attended by some 30 prominent men including Walter Forward, Benjamin Bakewell, John Harper, William Addison, George Kelly, George Wallace, Caleb Lee, J. A. Stockton, A. L. Pentland and others. The name of Pentland is noteworthy. At this meeting "Geo. Darsie late director of the Ohio and Pennsylvania Railroad" was one of three commissioners appointed to draft a constitution. Although inex-

perienced, they were conscious of the desirability of collecting material with which to develop a history of Western Pennsylvania and recommended the creation of a general library for the use of members.

Without depriving some future historian of the pleasure of the genealogical search we can point out that our treasurer, Mr. J. W. Robinson Creighton is a kinsman of William Robinson, Jr., first president of the Pittsburgh and Ohio Railroad, later known as the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad of which George Darsie was a director; that George Darsie was the father-in-law of George W. Anderson, a leather merchant who appears to be a kinsman of James Anderson who gave a collection of 1,500 books to the library of Old Allegheny in 1853; that on the death of Stephen Foster who had been a great admirer of Susan Pentland, he (Foster) was buried in the *Robinson* lot of Allegheny Cemetery; that Mr. Creighton's immediate ancestors were also associated with the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad, and after all, two Creightons, Robert and Henry, appear in the Day Book.

From these bits of intelligence it is sufficient for us at this time, pending future research, to theorize: (1) that the Day Book was owned at one time by George Darsie and through him passed to his son-in-law George Anderson; (2) that it was set apart for use in a newly formed historical library; (3) that in the rivalry of the three societies which followed, it was retained by the Anderson family and carried to California; (4) that before departure, under the persuasion of a happy relationship the removal of this page was permitted with a feeling that the value of the Day Book would not be greatly impaired and (5) that in time with the sole survival of *this* society the gentleman who had fallen heir to the Day Book recognized that its return to us would be desirable. Meanwhile *page* 33 showing wear and handling came down as an heirloom through the Robinson, Wilkins, Pentland, Creighton line.

This all adds up to a story which is almost incredible. Now we have hopes that missing page 15 may also return.

ROBERT D. CHRISTIE

THE MARSHALL KEY

Mr. Paul K. Marshall has presented this Society with a large brass key of special interest to us at this time. This key was known to have been used on a great padlock which secured the heavy black walnut door

of what was supposed to be a powder room of Fort Pitt. (The term was not used in the modern sense.)

The James Rees & Son boat and engine works was located in the block bounded by Marbury, Duquesne Way, Hay Street and an alley parallel to Penn Avenue. Their work required a small iron furnace known as a cupola and in excavating for its construction a tumbled-in brick room, its door and this key with padlock were uncovered, also several canisters or flasks with spouts which suggested use for powder. At a much later date Thomas Rees had the door made into 12 canes with silver heads (Hardy & Hays) which he distributed among his friends.

The key and padlock lay for a time in a storage room and having taken a liking to Mr. Marshall, Mr. Rees one day invited him to take any of the articles which appealed to him as of historic interest. Accordingly, among other items he placed the lock in a wooden chest but slipped the key in his pocket, a move which preserved it. A drayman who was to carry the chest to Mr. Marshall's home was unable to do so at the moment, but promised to pick it up next day. During the night the building and its contents were destroyed by fire.

No serious effort has been made to identify the structure which Rees uncovered but consultation of the plans of Fort Pitt of 1759 shows what appears to be a cellar-like indentation in the extreme north east section of the parapet, on the eastern side of the draw which admitted water to the moat around the fort proper. This spot is certainly close to the point of excavation. It is also worthy of note that William Greenough the boat builder whose big ship yard at Sucks (Sic) Run also owned lots in this block. The boat and engine works of the Rees company required that boats be hauled out for repair or engine work and there may be a relationship between the draw to admit water to the fort and the ways on which boats were hauled out for service. It is pure speculation that the room located there may have been for the distribution of ammunition, to those who manned the rampart, without unnecessary exposure in crossing this canal to replenish exhausted supply.

ROBERT D. CHRISTIE