



National Genealogical Society Quarterly

ESTABLISHED APRIL, 1912

Committee on Publication

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VOL. XVI, WASHINGTON, SEPT., 1928, No. 3

Annual subscription\$3.00
Single numbers (two exceptions, \$1.) . . .75
Vol. 1, Complete, few remaining\$5.00
VOLS. II to XVI, per set\$38.00

Entered as second-class matter March 28,
1913, at the post office at Washington, D. C.,
under the Act of August 24, 1912.

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IMPORTANT PUBLICATION

The recent helpful and admirable address by Prof. Henry Sylvester Jacoby, of Cornell University, before our N. G. S., entitled "How May We Best Encourage The Publication of

Genealogical Works?" will appear in the December issue of the Quarterly. Prof. Jacoby has been added to the Committee on Publication and we welcome his active cooperation in the work of the Society.

Correspondents should remember that the postal authorities seem unable to distinguish between "National Genealogical Society" and "National Geographical Society." Please plainly address your mail "Care 905 Mass. Ave., N. W., Washington, D. C.," and it will assist in securing better postal service.

LOST BATTALION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR, PA.*

By Edgar J. Pershing, Philadelphia, Pa.

"In the spring of 1781, conditions in Westmoreland County, Pa., caused by the Revolutionary War were deplorable. Colonel Brodhead, who commanded the Colonial forces at Fort Pitt and Col. Archibald Lochry, county lieutenant of Westmoreland county, had not been able to agree concerning the military policy to be followed in Western Pennsylvania. As a result of their dissensions, the citizens of Westmoreland were very much at the mercy of marauding bands of Indians who based their operations from the territory north of the Allegheny and West of the Monongahela Rivers.

During the early Summer of 1781, General George Rogers Clarke of Virginia, organized an expedition which was to operate against the Shawnee, Delaware and Sandusky Indians in Ohio, for the purpose of stopping their forays into Western Virginia and Pennsylvania. He invited the authorities of Westmoreland county to join in the expedition and as we remember the facts, Col. Brod-

*From *The Latrobe Bulletin, Pa.*, December 31, 1924:

"The Bulletin considers itself fortunate in being enabled to give to its readers a most interesting account of the expedition made by Colonel Archibald Lochry against the Indians, in 1781.—the account being from the pen of Edgar J. Pershing, Esq., of Philadelphia. It contains data never before printed. Mr. Pershing came upon the hidden facts while seeking material for the "Pershing Family in America" [which he recently published.]

Upon being shown the material printed for the first time in today's Bulletin, Dr. Thomas Montgomery, former State Librarian and now Librarian Pa. State Historical Society, Philadelphia, declared the discovery of the letters and the roster of the Lochry Expedition to have been "the most important historical find," made in Pennsylvania in the past ten years."

head was instructed by General Washington, to aid him with supplies as well as ammunition.

Several companies of rangers had been organized in Westmoreland county prior to 1781. Their duty was to guard the several localities in which they were recruited, in case of sudden Indian attacks. They were led by Captains Shannon and Stokeley and carried only such indifferent weapons as they supplied for themselves. Their service was voluntary.

The Indian menace was then a matter of serious consideration on the Northern and Western boundaries of the county, so that when Col. Lochry and the people of Westmoreland were invited to join the Clarke expedition, Captains Shannon and Stokeley and their rangers agreed to go with him and assist Clarke in his campaign, under Lochry's command.

The records concerning the organization of the expedition are indefinite and as they appear in the various histories of the county, are entirely based upon tradition. The most generally accepted story of the expedition is that it was gathered by Lochry at Mericle's (Markle's) Mills (now West Newton) on the Youghiogheny River, some time about the middle of July, 1781.

The force consisted of approximately 100 men with some horses, and the trip was no doubt made by water from Mericle's Mills to Fort Pitt.

No records have been found to indicate when the expedition reached Fort Pitt, but apparently Lochry did not linger there for any length of time. He did not get either the supplies or ammunition Broadhead had been instructed to give him, for Clarke evidently pursued his journey down the Ohio River with the original force organized in Westmoreland county.

The accepted traditions further indicate that Lochry arrived at Fort Henry (now Wheeling) some time early in August and found that Clarke had preceded him down the River

leaving no supplies or ammunition, but requesting Lochry to follow. After some delay in building additional boats, Lochry again set out to join Clarke. Some days later he sent Captain Shannon with four men to reach Clarke and bring back ammunition. Mathias Fisher, of Ligonier was one of the men who went with Captain Shannon. All of them were captured by the Indians who took Lochry's letter, and having learned of his lack of ammunition, immediately arranged to attack him. They called in their braves and raised a force of about 150 Indians who were led by Simon Girty, a white renegade, who had traitorously accepted service under the British and led the hostile Indians on the Western frontier, shortly after the opening of the Revolution. One of Shannon's men was killed while attempting to escape, but he and three surviving companions were forced to accompany the Indians for several days, while they followed Lochry down the River, at safe distance and waited the arrival of additional forces with which they intended ultimately to attack.

On the afternoon of August 24, Lochry made camp near the mouth of Laughrey's Creek, which empties into the Ohio near its junction with the Miami River. The water was low and the camp site selected was on a shelving beach back of which rose a precipitous river bank to the edge of the forest. One of Lochry's men had killed a buffalo and as his force had been short of supplies, the entire party were engaged in enjoying a buffalo roast when, without warning, the Indians opened fire from behind the trees and bushes along the top of the river bank. The surprise was complete and though Lochry's men resisted until their ammunition was exhausted, thirty-seven of their number, including Lochry, were killed and the sixty-four remaining members of the expedition were captured. The wounded who were unable to travel were immediately put to death. More than forty new graves were made on

the river bank and then as the sun went down the survivors including Captain Mathias Fisher and the other messengers who had been captured earlier were marched away into the western wilderness.

During the ensuing year, vague rumors of the disaster reached Westmoreland; but who had died in the battle, or the fate of the survivors, if there were any such, was veiled in mystery, while all Westmoreland mourned.

Even Clarke did not learn the fate of the expedition until months afterwards when he returned to Virginia. He never directly accomplished the results which he set out to effect. In fact, Western Pennsylvania, was more exposed to the forays of the Indians than before.

Lochry's expedition was the first major military operation organized entirely by the people of Westmoreland. Long before the county was established Braddock's defeat occurred within the limits of the territory, which was subsequently part of the county. A few years later, Major Grant was defeated near Fort Pitt, and then Boquet won a great victory over the Indians at Bushy Run, but in all of these battles, the forces engaged were largely composed of British troops from east of the mountains.

Lochry's men were all Westmorelanders and the defeat brought sorrow to almost every cabin within the eastern limits of her territory. It was fourteen months before any eye witness or participant in the Battle of the Miami returned to Westmoreland. Then Captain Craig and Mathias Fisher and eight or ten of their companions returned and told stories which have been woven into the traditions now generally accepted as correct. They related their experiences, but unfortunately no one made records of their stories.

Perhaps the most authentic of the traditions remaining today, may be gathered from the descendants of Mathias Fisher, among whom they seem to have passed from generation to

generation. The personal experiences which Fisher related, indicate that all of the prisoners taken at the Miami, were sold by the Indians to the British who were usually willing to give one gallon of whiskey for each captive. They were then taken to Detroit and later were imprisoned in a stockade built on an island in the St. Lawrence River, near Montreal. Captain Craig and Mathias Fisher and a few of their companions escaped from this island in the late summer of 1782 and after suffering great hardships, returned to Westmoreland by way of Lake Champlain, New York and Philadelphia.

The traditions based upon the tales of Craig and Fisher were written into the earlier histories of Westmoreland county. Dallas Albert in the first of these histories states that no record of Lochry's expedition were to be found in the State Archives at Harrisburg or the War Department at Washington and his belief that no such records existed.

Some months ago, efforts were made to determine the truth or falsity of a tradition which has run in the Pershing family for many years. The story was that John, a brother of Frederick Pershing, one of the earliest settlers in the county had been killed at the Battle of the Miami. Since no records were available in this country it was thought that perhaps some information concerning him might be found among the Records of the British War Office at London. Inquiries were made but no records were found. Then the suggestion was made that some record of the prisoners taken at the Miami, might be found in the Public Archives of Canada and when a search was made there, certain correspondence and the list of killed and captured was discovered. We have since learned that the Canadian records are copies of the original documents and reports now deposited in the British Museum at London. They have served the particular purpose of our search because in the list of killed, we find the name

of John Pheasant, a misprint for John Pershing, and we consider their publication for the first time in Westmoreland county, by the Bulletin, after a lapse of almost one hundred and fifty years, as one of the most valuable additions, of recent years, to the early history of the county on our Border Wars.

The records in their chronological order are as follows:

In Council
Philadelphia, July 23rd, 1781.

Sir:

I duly received your favor of the Fourth of July, and laid it before the Council. The difficulty of getting any account of the large sums of money sent to the frontiers has been for some time a subject of Reflexions upon all those who have received them. And it would have given us pleasure if we could have said that there were any exceptions. With respect to those Sub Lieutenants who have not settled we can only say that the Militia Law has vested with you sufficient power to compel an account, and that we might insist on your putting the Law in force, as it is become not only a duty but a matter of indispensable necessity, that the account should be rendered.

We know nothing of Colonel James Percy's Settlement, as we presume he is a sub-lieutenant, we think he ought to have settled with you, and then your general account to be settled with the public. We must observe to you that Col. Brodhead's letters tho' they may be proper to shew, that the expresses were not needlessly sent are not the proper vouchers for that part of your account. The receipts from the persons employed are in this case the proper vouchers which doubtless you have. We have carefully perused the Letters and papers which accompanied your letter and it is with much pleasure I am to express the satisfaction of the Council in the proceedings of the good people of the country with respect to General Clarke's expedition. It has been sug-

gested by Colonel Broadhead that General Clarke's expedition was not calculated for the relief of the Frontiers but designed for another quarter. We are glad to find from such good authority that it is otherwise and make no doubt after what has passed, that he will receive such farther aid and support as may be necessary for the completion of his purpose. We are persuaded it will give the only effectual relief from the distresses which have so long and so severely afflicted the frontiers.

We are extremely concerned to see the dissensions and disputes which prevail in the country and which must weaken its credit and Force. The money and ammunition sent, and unaccounted for, we are persuaded have contributed much to it. The distribution of the Force of the Frontiers, the neglect of duty of the officers commanding that Force, at the same time overlooked or indulgently treated by those who should have exerted themselves, and the opportunities supposed to have been taken to serve themselves, and friends, have all made impressions and probably in some degree created those uneasinesses.

The Petition of Sundry inhabitants of Westmoreland in your Favour has been read in Council and filed. It will have its due weight, but we must at the same time observe, that these Testimonials are so easily obtained that they do not operate so much to the advantage of an officer as the punctual observance of his duty, impartiality in his office, and a frequent and fair settlement of his accounts, which make all such certificates unnecessary, not being informed with respect to the balance of your accounts, which are yet before the auditors, we can say nothing to the postscripts of your letter which desires the balance to be sent up, but any balance ascertained will be duly paid. As we do not observe anything by this express which is so special that it might not have come by a private hand, we hope it will not be a public

charge. We must repeat our injunctions in all cases to be as frugal and careful as possible in all matters of public expense.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient and very humble Servant,

Jos. Reed,
President.

To Colonel Archibald Lockry
Lieutenant of Lancaster county

A true copy
A. De Peyster.

Fort Pitt, Aug. 7th, 1781

Dear Sir,

I received your long and kind letter by Mr. Oar. You may be assured that nothing gives me greater pleasure than to find that you and a number more good men are going with General Clarke, it was my sincere wish but not so happy. I am in hopes the country will turn out to go against Sandusky, if so I hope to meet you there and if not I will take one or two Indians and worthy white men and go myself. I am very sorry it was not in my power to send you two pairs of mogasons but I send you all I have got—please present my best compliments to Capt. Edwin Gisteroy and any other of my acquaintances that is with you. I wish you a successful campaign and safe return and am with every sentiment of esteem.

Your very Humble Servant
(signed) L. Brady

Col. Lockry

A true Copy

A. De Peyster, Major

(Copy of a letter from Colonel Lockry to General George Rogers Clarke).
Wheeling, Augt. 8th, 1781.

My dear General.

I arrived at this Post this moment. I find that there is neither Boats, provisions or ammunition left. I have sent a small canoe after you to know what is to be done. If you send back these articles mentioned and with directions where I will overtake you, I

will follow. We are upwards of one hundred strong including Light Horse.

I am, Sir,

Yours

(Signed) A. Lockry.

A true copy

A. De Peyster
Major

On Publick Service

Archibd. Lockry, County Lt. Westmoreland, Esqr.

(per W. Wallace)

Middle Island
9th Augt. 1781.

Sir,—

I this moment received yours of the 8th instance. I am heartily sorry that after waiting so long for you I would set out but a day before your arrival. I also learn that you were so kind as to send an express but he did not arrive and I of course supposed that you had shared my fate in meeting with every dissatisfaction from the populace. I am exceeding unhappy at our not joining at Weelind, but don't know that either of us are to blame, the militia with us continue to desert, and consequently I cannot remain long in one place otherways should be happy in forming a junction here. The following plan is proposed. I have augmented the command of Mr. Wallace to eight alert men furnished with fifteen days provisions for the whole of your troops, and there will be left at the lower point of the third Island below Middle Island for your reception one large Horse Boat and a sufficiency of small ditto with what you will be able to collect on your passage, camp kettles and C. and C., under the protection of a few men. I shall move on slowly for the reasons before recited and you will use the greatest industry as you cannot possibly pass us without our knowledge. I have suffered much lately but you again encourage me. I

have the Honour to be with the Highest Esteem.

Your obedt. Servt.

G. R. Clarke

N. B. Captain Wallace will give you every intelligence you wish.

(A true copy from the original)

Detroit Sepr. 1781.

A true copy,—A. De Peyster, Major.

August 14, 1781

My dear Gl.

This evening we arrived at Camp three Islands. We are every man in great spirits and determined to go where ordered. There is no Desertion in our Troops. We had the pleasure to apprehend an officer and fifteen Deserters on our march which I hope we will safely deliver to their duty.

We will proceed after you as quick as possible and am Dear Gl.

Your most obedt. humble Servt.

A. Lochry.

Gl. George R. Clarke.

Camp near the Ohio

Augt. 29th 1781

Sir,

On the 26th you had enclosed an account that Capt. Brant and George Girty with the Indians advanced upon the Ohio, had taken one of the Clarke's Boats after his having past down the river in the night, not thinking themselves in numbers sufficient to attack him and having found his orders to Major Craighcraft that more Troops were to follow under the Command to a Colonel Lockry, lay in wait for them, attacked and took the whole, not allowing one to escape.

Agreeable to a return it appears that there has been thirty-seven killed amongst whom is Lockry their commandant, with some other officers. This stroke with desertion will reduce Clarke's army very much, and if the Indians had followed advice and been here in time it is more than probable he would have been now in our possession with his cannon. The

prisoners seem to be ignorant of what his intentions are, perhaps loss may oblige him to change his measures. However, we shall endeavour to keep the Indians together and watch his motions. His first intention was to penetrate to Sandusky through the Indian Country from whence Troops from Fort Pitt were to return home and he to Kentucky, the enclosed papers will furnish you with further particulars. We are with great respect, Sir.

Your most obedient and humble servants.

(Signed) Andrew Thompson

Alexr. McKee.

N. B. The Indians have not determined what to do with the prisoners, but seem inclined to adopt a good many.

Major De Peyster.

A true copy

A. S. De Peyster, Major.

Endorsed: Duplicate of intercepted Letters and C. taken by Joseph Brandt when he defeated Colonel Lochrey upon the Ohio.

Killed

1. Col. Lochrey
2. Capt. Campbell
3. Ens. Ralph
4. Ens. Maxwell
5. Ens. Cahell
6. Sergt. Galaher
7. Sergt. Evens
8. Sergt. Burris
9. Sergt. Forsyth
10. Sergt. Black
11. Sergt. Allison
12. Corp. Paton
13. John Gibson
14. John Young
15. Robt. Dongan
16. John Straiton
17. John Burns
18. William Hudson
19. John Pheasant
20. Zenis Hardon
21. John Milligan
22. John Corn
23. Mathew Lamb

24. Joseph Baily
25. John Smith
26. Wm. Cain
27. Adam Erwin
28. Peter McLin
29. Archibald Askin
30. David Ellinger
31. George Butcher
32. Peter Berkman
33. Josia Brooks
34. John Row
35. Jonas Peter
36. J. McRight
37. John McKimby

A true copy

A. De Peyster

Prisoners

1. Major Craigcraft
2. Capt. Stokly
3. Cap. Orr (Robert Orr, Wash. Twp.)
4. Cap. Shannon (Donegal Twp.)
5. Lt. Robinson
6. Lt. Anderson
7. Lt. Craig
8. Lt. Scott
9. Lt. Baker
10. Ens. Hunter
11. Ens. Guthrie
12. Qr. Mr. Wallace (William Wallace)
13. Sergt. Trimble
14. Sergt. McCloud
15. Patrick Johnson
16. Richard Fleming
17. Robert Watson
18. Abn Anderson
19. Mcl Hare
20. Wm. Mars
21. John Sence
22. Mcl Miller
23. Patrick Murphy
24. Jas. Cain (should be Kean)
25. Jas. McPherson
26. Wm. Martial
27. Peter Conoly
28. John Farrell
29. Denis McCarthy
30. Solomon Atkill
31. John Lavear
32. Mathias Fisher
33. George Dice
34. John Porter

35. John Smith
36. Adam Owing
37. Saml Le Fever
38. John Hunter
39. Joseph Erwin
40. Manassa Coyl
41. Hugh Steer
42. John Cat
43. Valantine Lawrence
44. Jacob Lawrence
45. Christian Fast
46. Charles McLin
47. William Noach
48. Henry France
49. Abm Highly
50. George Mason
51. Wm. Witherenton
52. Eairy Cuighly
53. Thos. James
54. Thos. Atkinson
55. John Stackhouse
56. Wm. Clark
57. Elishia Risley
58. James Dunseith
59. Danl. Cain
60. Wm. Think
61. Robert Wilson
62. Isaac Lewis
63. Alex Burns
64. Hugh More

The correspondence concerning the expedition and the list of killed and captured give us a more complete understanding of the events involved, than we ever had before, and constitutes a complete Muster Roll of the expedition.

It must be noted however that quartermaster, Mr. Wallace, listed as a prisoner was not a member of Lochry's command. He was the Captain Wallace mentioned in General Clarke's letter of August 9, to Lochry, and was probably from Virginia.

Some comment may be in order concerning the correspondence and perhaps some helpful conclusion may be drawn from a consideration of the traditions in the light of this newly discovered correspondence.

There is no doubt that George Girty was with the Indians who defeated Lochry. He was sometimes

known on the border as Colonel Butler, and commissioned as a lieutenant colonel by the British, but we do not believe Captain Brant was present at the battle, because reliable histories of his movements during 1781 would indicate that he was elsewhere. He was king of the Six Nations; a shrewd half breed, whose Indian name was Thayendenegro. However, some of the Indians of the Six Nations were in the party which defeated Lochry.

The list of killed and captured was probably prepared by Girty. He was present if he did not command the Indians who captured Colonel Crawford when his expedition to the Sandusky in 1782 met with disaster. It is reported that when Crawford was burned, he appealed to Girty as a white man to save his life, but Girty refused.

Major DePeyster was born in New York of American parentage. He was commissioned by the British shortly after the outbreak of the Revolution and commanded the military district of which Fort Detroit was the headquarters. His connection with this correspondence is therefore clearly explained, as it was the custom for military officers to copy and certify all documents passing through their hands.

The letter of August 8, undoubtedly reached Clarke because it was answered by him on the day following. The fact that an immediate reply was sent indicates that no great distance separated the forces of Lochry and Clarke at that time. It is likely that the letter now in the British Museum is a copy taken from Lochry's body, after his death, for we may fairly assume that having military training he kept a copy of the letter. This would explain how the copy became part of the file now lodged in the British Museum. On the contrary, Clarke's letter of August 9, is probably the original and if so was taken from Lochry's body. There could scarcely be any other explanation for its coming into the British custody.

The letter of August 14, was evidently intercepted by the Indians and

while we have not had any opportunity to examine the file at the British Museum, we believe it will be found to be an original. We do not think this letter is the one carried by Captain Shannon to convey Lochry's appeal to Clarke for ammunition. It is clear that the file in the Canadian Archives is incomplete and we feel quite confident that this letter (dated August 14) was not the Shannon letter, because it does not make the direct appeal for ammunition which as Mathias Fisher reported, Lochry made in his last letter.

Tradition indicates that only about twenty of the original members of the expedition ever returned and the fate of those who survived the battle, but did not return to Westmoreland will probably be in doubt forever.

Recently the efforts to compile a record of all the citizens of Westmoreland who took part in the Revolution proved disappointing and it is unlikely that a complete list can ever be made. In any event the list of Lochry's men as shown above, is undoubtedly correct, and is the latest contribution to the Revolutionary history of the county.

The uncertainty of the fate of Lochry and his men for so many months accentuated the grief of the families they left behind in the cabins of Westmoreland, but the disaster was brought home to them in even more terrible form in the following year when the Indians, emboldened by their victory at the Miami, invaded Westmoreland, killed many of the settlers, made captives of others and burned the village of Hannastown. It is now almost one hundred and fifty years since Lochry and his men ventured into the wilderness of Ohio and to their doom at the Miami, but since the list of killed and captured contains many family names still common to Westmoreland and Western Pennsylvania, its publication is desirable because it will definitely settle the question of the service of their ancestors with Lochry, for many descendants of Westmoreland's patriots and pioneers.

Edgar J. Pershing