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VALLEY FORGE.

1898.





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Valley Forge.

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ADDRESS

BY

Hon. Samuel W. Pennypacker, LL.D.

BEFORE THE

Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the
Revolution,

JUNE 18, 1898.



PHILADELPHIA.

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Address
of
Hon. Samuel Whitaker Pennypacker, LL.D.,

Delivered at Valley Forge, Pa., June 18, 1898.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SONS OF THE REVOLUTION:

I FEEL that I owe you somewhat of an apology for arising in this presence, and with these surroundings, without having made more formal preparation. I am led to the effort, however, because the story of Valley Forge has been fully written, and has been eloquently spoken, so that upon an occasion of this character nothing more will be expected from me than a modest contribution, and because I feel that the importance of the few facts which I shall have to present to you will more than compensate for any lack of vigor in expression.

Valley Forge lies in a classic region. Across yonder hills was born Anthony Wayne, whose capture of Stony Point was the brilliant achievement of the Revolutionary Army, and who, later, in command of all the armies of the United States, won for us the great territory of the Northwest, from which were created the populous and powerful States which now exist in that section of the country.

Five miles away in another direction was born Peter Muhlenberg, a major-general in the Revolutionary Army, whose statue in the Capitol at Washington represents the military achievements of Pennsylvania.

The road over which you have just marched was laid out in 1724, from Philadelphia to Moore Hall, the seat of William

Moore, colonel of a regiment in the French and Indian War, President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Chester County for forty years, and a heroic figure in the political life of the province.

The high-water mark of the Rebellion was at the Bloody Angle on Cemetery Ridge at Gettysburg; the high-water mark of the British invasion during the Revolutionary War was at the Fountain Inn tavern, four miles above us in the town of Phoenixville. In front of you, from Gordon's Ford to Fatland Ford, the British army forced the passage of the Schuylkill at the time of the capture of Philadelphia.

At the mouth of the Perkiomen, on the opposite side of the Schuylkill, was fought the only naval engagement which ever occurred upon that river, and later Audubon, the naturalist, hunted for birds along the same stream, and there made his home.

Almost within sight of us lies the rural and Pennsylvania Dutch village of the Trappe, with a population, it may be, of four hundred people, whose houses are stretched on each side of the pike. In that village there lived the founder of one of the most important of the American churches. In it were born a major-general in the Revolutionary Army and a United States Senator; the president of the first American Congress under the Constitution; one of the most noted of American botanists, whose labors and writings have met with approval over the world; a colonel in the war of 1812 and an adjutant-general and attorney-general of Wisconsin; a governor of the State of Pennsylvania; a president of Girard College; an auditor-general of the State of Pennsylvania; a congressman and two state senators. In it there lived the ancestors of the Todds of Kentucky, and the maternal ancestors of General Grant, besides another general of the Revolutionary Army. I challenge any community in this broad land, from Maine to Texas, to show that with the same population they have produced an equal number of people of like distinction in public life.

Much as the history of Valley Forge has been examined and studied, heretofore that investigation has never been able to discover an original and authentic plan of the encampment as it was

during the Revolutionary War. When Jared Sparks, the historian, in the early part of this century, was preparing for publication the letters of George Washington, he was confronted with the need of such a plan. Under the auspices of John Armstrong, who was then Secretary of War, a man named John Davis, who as a youth had lived on the site of the encampment, but who was then an old man, gave his recollections as specifically as he could, and from such data a map was prepared which was inserted in those volumes. The original is now at Cornell University, in the State of New York. They have there another plan which the librarian writes to me is a copy of one found among the papers of Sparks. In 1828, Sparks had had access to the letters and papers of Lafayette, and this copy is supposed to be a copy of a plan which was in the possession of Lafayette; but an examination of it shows that it was not made from original surveys, for there is written upon it in French the statement that the lines as they there appear are not in their due places, but ought to be extended further out to the front, and that a bend in the river is not disclosed. Now it so happens that within the last year I secured from Amsterdam a set of most important military maps of the Revolutionary period, consisting of originals drawn at the time by a French engineer, who was with the Continental army. Among them are plans of the Battle of Trenton, of West Point, of Newport, Rhode Island, of New York, of the Battle of Yorktown, of Charleston, and last, and of the most interest to us, a plan of the encampment at Valley Forge.* After considering what would be the best way of calling the attention of scholars to this important contribution to the history of the Revolutionary War, I could think of none better than to present it upon this occasion, before the Sons of the Revolution, and to let it appear in the forthcoming volume which you are about to publish. This

* This map shows what was not before known, that the Carolina troops were encamped on the north side of the valley creek in Chester County; and that headquarters, before Washington occupied the Potts house, were not, as has been alleged, in a *marquéé* tent, but were at the house in Tredyffrin Township, Chester County, then owned by James Davis, and subsequently by Dr. William Harris and by Dr. J. R. Walker.

demonstration will not be without permanent importance, since you have the assurance that in the manner just described you have added something whose historical value cannot be overestimated to the records of the event you celebrate.

The antithesis of Valley Forge is the fête given by the British troops in the city of Philadelphia, called "The Meschianza." That incomparable orator, Henry Armitt Brown, in his magnificent oration, to which probably some of you listened, when he depicted the clouds which darkened over Valley Forge, threw the sunlight upon the lawn of Joseph Wharton in the city of Philadelphia. Novelists have been attracted by the same theme. The earliest effort of this kind, "Meredith; or, the Mystery of the Meschianza," by Dr. James McHenry, appeared in Philadelphia in 1831, and possessed decided literary merit. The next was "The Quaker Soldier," by Colonel J. Richter Jones, in 1851, and then came "Pemberton," by Henry Peterson, in 1873, and last, that great book, "Hugh Wynne," of which we are all proud, written by Dr. S. Weir Mitchell during the past year, which has called increased attention to Pennsylvania literature all over the world.

None of the investigators or writers upon these topics have been able to give to us the music to which the well dressed and lightly cultivated ladies of Philadelphia, and André and the officers of the British army who were there as knights, danced at the Meschianza. But, though out of sight, it was not utterly lost. A happy chance preserved it and favors us. Those dances were dedicated to the wives of the favorite colonels, and they bore the names of the victories which the British army had won, such as "Flatbush," at Long Island, and "Brandywine." From that time down to the present that music has never been heard, and now, upon this occasion, this audience will, for the first time in one hundred and twenty years, and long after the last of the Knights of the Blended Rose is in his grave, listen to the music of the country dance of "Brandywine." Your band will play it.

(The band then played "Brandywine," which was enthusiastically received.)

22 The Brandewine.

The image displays a musical score for a dance piece titled "The Brandewine." The score is written on ten staves, organized into five systems of two staves each. The top staff of each system is in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music is in 2/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes), rests, and dynamic markings such as *mf* and *f*. There are also some performance instructions like "2" and "1" written below the notes. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

1st Gentleman fets to the 2^d Lady and turn the 3^d, the 1st Lady
the fame; lead down the middle, up again, cast off and Allemande
right and left.



There were other contrasts presented at Valley Forge. In February of 1778, late one afternoon, an officer in the army, fancying that one of his fellows had given him some insult, challenged his antagonist to a duel. The combat occurred the next morning, and that night the officer was buried on the outskirts of the camp. William McFee, one of the chaplains, upon the next Sunday, preached a sermon upon the evils of duelling. The names of the officer and his opponent, so far as I know, are lost in obscurity, but the sermon is still preserved.

Benedict Arnold, later in the season, at the home of Mistress Rossiter, where he had been taken with three wounds after the battle of Saratoga, gave a feast. It may have been somewhat like that of which you are to partake to-day. There were twenty-one officers present. Among them were Wayne, Lafayette, Greene, Knox, and Colonel Clement Biddle.

Later in 1778, about the 14th of December, another fact occurred to which I have never seen attention called. The army of General Burgoyne, captured in New York, and which it was thought desirable to remove to Winchester, in Virginia, were marched across the country, over Sullivan's bridge, then still standing a few hundred yards below this encampment, and brought up to the huts which the American army had left, and were there quartered. Think of the contrast the scene presented, and imagine the sensations of the proud officers of that army, compelled to occupy the abandoned huts of the ragged Continentals.

And now, what is the moral of Valley Forge? Why is it that this camp, where no battle was fought, and where no startling and momentous events occurred, has been fixed forever in the memories of men? Have you ever thought that, while true it is that the great Virginian was born along the banks of the Potomac, substantially the whole of his career was run in the State of Pennsylvania, and of what were the reasons for this fact? He first attracted attention at the battle of Great Meadows, in 1754; he won his early reputation at the defeat of Braddock, in 1755; he was a member of the Congress of 1774, which met in Carpenters' Hall; on the 15th of June, 1775, in Independence Hall, he was

made the commander-in-chief of the armies of the colonies. Save Long Island, which was a defeat, and Yorktown, where he was aided by the French fleet, and where it was a question whether the victory was won by the sailors of the French navy or the soldiers of the American army, all of his battles were fought around Philadelphia, at Germantown, Brandywine, Trenton, Princeton, and Monmouth.

During his career subsequent to the war, as President of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, and as President of the United States through two terms, he lived, with the exception of a few months, in the city of Philadelphia.

Let me read to you an extract from the oration delivered by David Ramsay, the celebrated contemporary historian, upon the death of George Washington, wherein he describes the General at the battle of Trenton :

“In the latter end of November the British commanders, instead of retiring into winter quarters, after driving the Americans from the State of New York, pursued them into New Jersey, with a fair prospect of annihilating their whole force. The moment was critical. Dangers and difficulties pressed on all sides. On the 16th of November twenty-seven hundred of the American army were taken prisoners in Fort Mifflin. In fourteen days after that event the flying camp, amounting to ten thousand men, having served out their time, claimed their discharge. Other whole regiments on similar grounds did the same. The few that remained with General Washington scarcely exceeded three thousand, and they were in the most forlorn condition, without tents or blankets, or any utensils to dress their provisions. . . . In this period, when the American army was relinquishing their general, and the people giving up the cause, some of their leaders going over to the enemy, and the British commanders succeeding in every enterprise, General Washington did not despair. He slowly retreated before the advancing foe, and determined to fall back to Pennsylvania, to Augusta County in Virginia, and, if necessary, to the westward of yonder mountains, where he was resolved in the last extremity to renew the struggle for the independence of his country. While his unconquered mind was brooding on these

ideas, fifteen hundred of the Pennsylvania militia joined him. With this small increase of force, he formed the bold resolution of recrossing the Delaware and attacking that part of the enemy which was posted in Trenton. Heaven smiled on the enterprise. On the 26th of December nine hundred Hessians were killed, wounded, or taken prisoners. This bold enterprise was in eight days after followed by another, which was planned with great address. General Washington, with his whole army, stole away under the cover of the night from the vicinity of a force far superior to his own, and, attacking in their rear a detachment of the British posted in Princeton, three hundred were taken prisoners and about one hundred killed and wounded. These two victories revived the drooping spirits of the Americans, and seemed, under Providence, to have been the means of their political salvation."

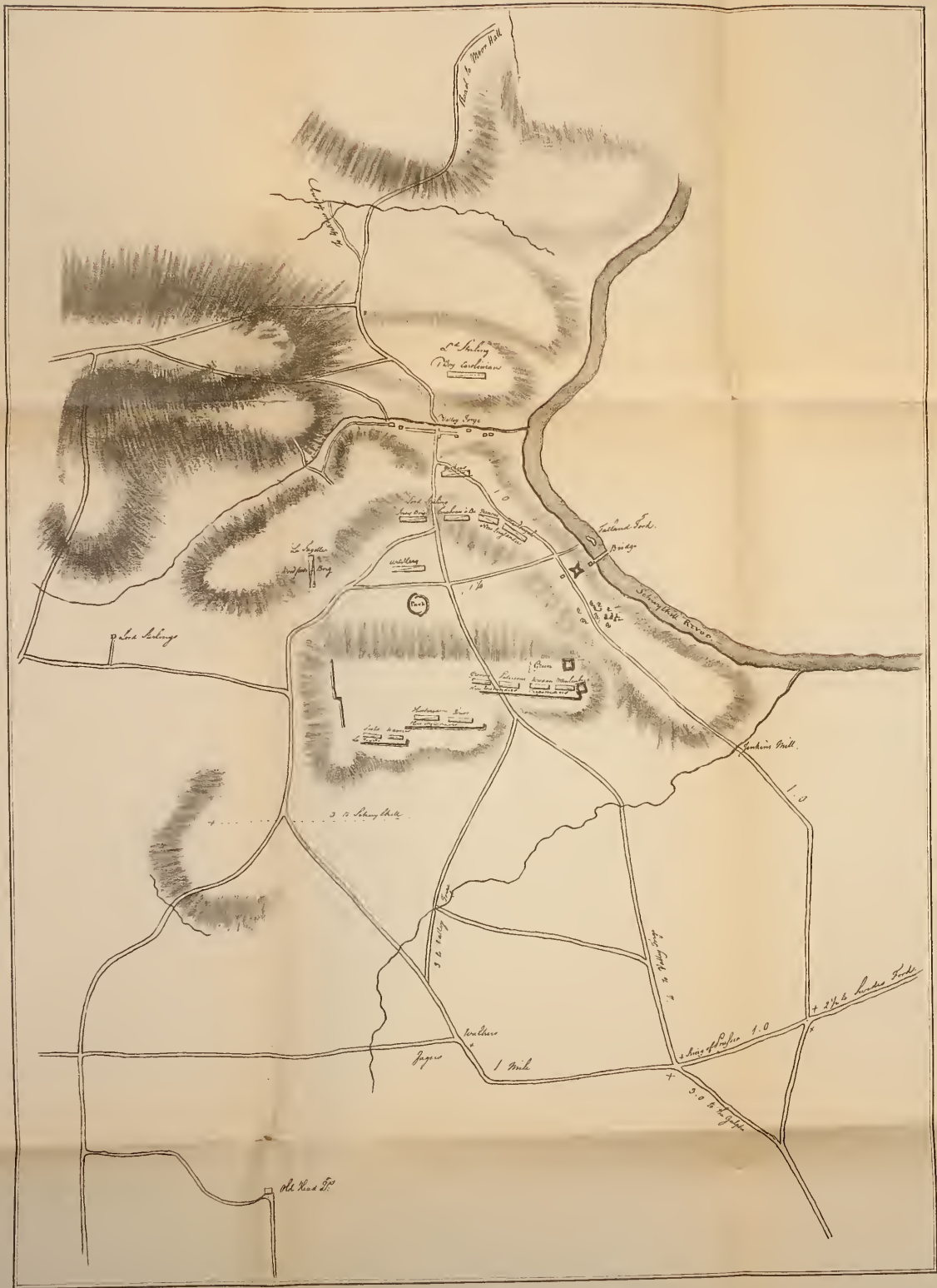
In other words, when this fateful crisis occurred, and when Washington, with all of his military capacity, had no means to suggest with which to meet it except retreat beyond the Allegheny Mountains, fifteen hundred men came to the rescue, and with that addition to his forces the tide was turned, and the liberty of the American people was secured. What you Sons of the Revolution ought ever to remember is that every one of those fifteen hundred men was a Pennsylvanian.

The mercurial and the excitable who enter readily into serious contests rarely have those sterner and stronger qualities which are necessary for success in important warfare. A Peter the Hermit may begin a Crusade, but it requires the doughty skill of a Godfrey of Boulogne and a Richard Cœur-de-Lion to carry it to the end. The revolutions that start with a Mirabeau close with a Bonaparte. Our American Revolution, though it had its commencement at Lexington, inevitably resulted in a struggle for the control of the shores of the Delaware.

The camp at Valley Forge holds its præminent position in history and in story because here, better than in the council, and better even than on the field of battle, were shown those qualities of persistence and steadfastness, under the greatest of trials and difficulties, which were essential to the final triumph.







CONTEMPORARY MAP OF THE ENCAMPMENT AT VALLEY FORGE 1777-78—By a French Engineer.

From the Original in the Library of HON. SAMUEL W. PENNYPACKER, LL. D.

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