The cover photo shows Wheeling as it appeared from an eminence on the Ohio side of the river, about a mile and a half below the central part of the town. Wheeling Island is seen on the left, and above it, on the hills in the distance, the National Road.

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THE WHEELING AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY meets nine times a year at Edgewood Lutheran Church on the second Sunday evening of the month every month except January, July, and August. The Society welcomes new members and invites you to attend. Information about the Society may be obtained from Dr. Kenneth Nodyne, Editor, 63 Oakland Avenue, Wheeling, WV 26003.
THE ECONOMY OF EARLY WHEELING AS SEEN THROUGH EUROPEAN EYES

by

Doug Fetherling

In Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century, published accounts of travel in America were one of the most popular forms of literature. In that age of slow transportation and poor communication, when to cross the ocean meant undertaking a long and hazardous journey, all manner of travel narratives were popular to a degree hard to imagine today. Thousands of people with no hope of seeing Africa or Asia at first hand went there vicariously by devouring the diaries of other people’s trips. But the most popular of such books (usually published in two volumes) were the ones about North America. The United States was still a new country and a new but growing presence in the rest of the world. Literally hundreds of titles were published during this period (particularly in France and Britain) to satisfy the curiosity of the public and to provide the prospective emigrant with details of what he might expect.

It was not surprising that Wheeling should have its place in a great many such books (which are now called “voyages-and-travels” in the antiquarian book trade). Until well into the century, “the west,” that amorphous touchstone of American history, began at the Ohio River. Wheeling was a natural stopping-off place: the logical port of call for those going upriver or down or (after the opening of the National Road) for those heading directly west. Because they were concerned with giving their readers a welter of detail, many of the travel-writers left behind significant portraits of Wheeling as a frontier town and a center for the transshipment of goods. Taken together, in fact, many of them provide a sort of shadow history of the city’s early economy.

When Francois-Andre Michaux, a French botanist, travelled down the Ohio in 1802, for instance, he saw open veins of coal on either bank but was forced to conclude that “as the country is nothing but one continuous forest and the population is scarce, these mines are of no account.”

Wheeling itself, he noted, has not been in existence more than twelve years. It consists of about seventy houses, built of wood, which, as in all the new American towns, are separated by an interval of several fathoms. This little town is bounded by a long hill, nearly two-hundred fathoms high, the base of which is not more than two-hundred fathoms from the river. In this space the houses are built, forming but one street, in the middle of which is the main road, which follows the windings of the river for a distance of more than two-
hundred miles. From fifteen to twenty large shops, well stocked, supply the inhabitants twenty miles round with provisions. Wheeling also shares with Pittsburgh in the export trade carried on with the western country. Some Philadelphia merchants prefer to send their goods here, although the journey is a day longer. That trifling inconvenience is well compensated for by the advantage gained in avoiding the long winding of the Ohio beyond Pittsburgh.  

By comparison, native American travellers often tended to assume greater knowledge of their readers and so gave less detailed and not necessarily more accurate accounts. A mere three years after Michaux, for example, Aaron Burr, the former vice-president, stopped at Wheeling on his way downriver to Blennerhassett Island and infamy. What he saw was "the town of Wheeling, sometimes erroneously spelled Wheeling; a pretty, neat village, well situated on the south bank, containing sixty or eighty houses, some of brick and some of fine free stone found in the vicinity." Burr added: "Saw several well-dressed women, who had the air of fashion and movements of vous autres on the coast."

For all his indifferent description, Burr was shrewd in his last observation. As Michaux himself noted, Wheeling and Pittsburgh were vying for trade, and peddlers from both cities "go up and down the river in canoes and bring them [the natives] haberdashery goods, and especially tea and coffee, in return for some of their produce." The potential for industry was present. But for the time being both cities serve as mercantile centres. Yet, in fairness, the lavishness or meanness of individual descriptions depended to a great extent upon the temperament of the traveller and comparison with what he had seen elsewhere.

Thus, in 1817, another Frenchman, Edouard de Montule, found "Wheeling" to be "a little town...by no means as wealthy as its position on the Ohio promised. Neither the houses nor the streets were as neat as those in most of the interior towns." Montule, too, was intimidated to the point of insult by Wheeling Hill, which featured "one of the poorest and most dangerous roads I have yet encountered; it twines on the mountain, and I sometimes feared that I should either leave my horse there or tumble with it into the abyss."

Yet elsewhere on his journey, Montule had found evidence of a new technology that would shortly cause the economy of Wheeling and other river towns to boom. He had first touched on the North American mainland at New Orleans and had proceeded from there to Louisville by steamboat, one of the early unreliable, deep-draught side-wheelers. While on the Mississippi, however, he had caught a glimpse of another more suitable type of vessel - one that had been launched in Wheeling a year before his arrival. It had been left to another traveller, William Cobbett, to record for posterity the construction of this famous craft that would change the face of the district's economy and create some of the most-cherished American folklore.

Cobbett was an Englishman who lived for various periods in Canada and the United States and who acquired fame (and notoriety) on both sides of the Atlantic as an author and publisher, Tory and radical by turns. In 1816, he spent time on the Ohio and found Wheeling "a handsome place, and of considerable importance." Flour, he recorded, was selling at four or five dollars a barrel and fresh beef at four or five cents a pound; laborers received a dollar a day. But then Cobbett, a champion of agricultural reform and of what he called "cottage economy," could be expected to mention such matters. He even took time to report the precise method of paving used in construction of the new National Road.

The most remarkable part of his journal, however, was the following entry made in July 1816.

They are building a steam-boat at Wheeling, which is to go, they say, 1800 miles up the Missouri river. The wheels are made to work in the stern of the boat, so as not to come in contact with the floating trees, snags, planters, &c., obstructions most likely very numerous in that river. But, the placing the wheels behind only saves them; it is no protection against the boat's sinking in case of being pierced by a planter or sawyer. Observing this I will suggest a plan which has occurred to me, and which, I think, would provide against sinking, effectively; but, at any rate, it is one which can be tried very easily and with very little expense. - I would make a partition of strong plank; put it in the broadest fore-part of the boat, right across, and put good iron bolts under the bottom of the boat, through these planks, and screw them on the top of the deck. Then put an upright post in the inside of the boat against the middle plank partition, and put a spur to the upright post. I would then load the fore-part of the boat, thus partitioned off with lumber of such loading as least liable to injury, and best calculated to stop the progress of a sawyer after it has gone through the boat. - By this appropriating the fore-part of the boat to the reception of planters and sawyers, it appears to me that the other part would be secured against all intrusion.

This is a wonderful illustration of Cobbett's personality, showing him to be observant, practical, mechanically gifted and something of a busybody. He could not have known it, but it is also a first-hand account of a turning point in the economy of Wheeling and indeed the entire western region.

He did not say so, but the boat Cobbett saw being constructed
was the Washington, a two-decker of 400 tons, which Montule spied in 1817. It was the first to employ the shallow, flat-bottomed hull that made the river traffic safe and profitable, "a vessel that set the pattern for all future steamboats on the western waters." 8 By 1820, 61 others of the same design had been built in Wheeling, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and elsewhere; and by 1830, more than two hundred. Thus began the age of opulent river boats and wicked river towns, which other, later travellers would write of contemptuously as one of the pernicious side effects of democracy.

As the frontier receded, a different breed of travel-writer emerged: the snob. Many authors already famous, and others who would later become so, made the obligatory voyage on the Ohio but found it wanting. In 1842, for example, Charles Dickens travelled south from Pittsburgh, but he thought Wheeling so insignificant by the standards of England as to be unworthy of any comment at all, though he conceded that "there are few places where the Ohio sparkles more brightly than in the Big Grave Creek," whose famous mound fascinated him. 9

But the most hostile of these observers was Mrs. Frances Trollope, the mother of the Victorian novelist Anthony Trollope. In 1827, this English gentlewoman journeyed to Cincinnati to open a lavish and somewhat gaudy "emporium," and she discovered she had only disdain for the New World. Her book, Domestic Manners of the Americans, first published in 1832, so offended the American public that for years her very name carried with it a hint of something scandalous.

On her way upriver from Cincinnati, Mrs. Trollope found Wheeling "a flourishing town" and the hotel service marked by "all that sedulous attention which in this country distinguishes a slave state." 10 But her mood turned predictably sour when she was stuck there for three days (one of them a Sunday) before making stage coach connections to Little Washington and from there the east coast. Thus, too, to her stranded eyes, "Wheeling has little of beauty to distinguish it, except the ever lovely Ohio. . . ." 11 But the natural setting was disfigured by the industry that had come to Wheeling on the heels of the steam revolution and allowed for excavation of the abundant coal noted by earlier commentators.

She saw Wheeling as a city of "many manufactories, among others, one for blowing and cutting glass, which we visited. We were told by the workmen that the articles finished there were equal to any in the world; but my eyes refused their assent. The cutting was very good, though by no means equal to what we see in daily use in London." 12 Lacking Cobbett's grasp of economics (her emporium went bankrupt), she saw only ugliness in enterprise, concluding: "I do not remember in England to have seen any spot however near a coal mine, so dyed in black as Wheeling. . . ." 13 Even the coal she found to be of inferior quality. As though wishing to seem contrary in the eyes of history, however, she praised the obstacle that had so frightened Montule, calling Wheeling Hill "a fine bold hill." 14

This last comment, perhaps, is especially revealing of Mrs. Trollope's absence of economic savvy. In time the river traffic which set off such growth in early Wheeling would wither away at the hands of the railroads, though not before a period in which the city clung to the polite fiction of its commercial parity with Pittsburgh. It was left for another English traveller, the Hon. Charles Augustus Murray, to pinpoint the reason for Pittsburgh's ultimate financial superiority.

Calling at Wheeling in 1834, he too made note of the coal, and afforded the city the by now common description as "a town of considerable and increasing importance," whose population he estimated at seven to eight thousand people. 15 But Murray then went on to remark that "the greatest obstacle to its becoming a very wealthy city, appears to be the extreme narrowness of the ledge on which it is built, there being but a small area between the mountain and the river; so that the streets, if extended, must be extended only longitudinally." 16

He was, of course, correct. The valley in which Wheeling lies was simply too narrow to support extensive industry and a large population; and once its potential was reached, it stabilized, then waned. Montule's treacherous mountain and Mrs. Trollope's "fine bold hill" was an impediment with which Pittsburgh, at the broad confluence of two other rivers, did not have to contend.

NOTES


2. Ibid.


4. Handlin translation from Michaux.


6. Ibid.


During the American Revolution a savage conflict took place in the region west of the Appalachian Mountains. The British encouraged the Indians to attack American settlers and allegedly paid them for each scalp they took. Into this arena came such intrepid frontiersmen as Daniel Boone, George Rogers Clark and Simon Kenton. Kenton's career was in many ways as colorful and dramatic as Boone's. Certainly his captivity by the Shawnee Indians during the American Revolution was one of the most horrible and terrifying experiences suffered by any frontiersman of the time. The account that follows graphically describes that experience.

In September 1778 Simon Kenton was sent into Shawnee country on a spying expedition with Alexander Montgomery and George Clark. The men arrived at Chillicothe Old Town, a major gathering place of Indians, and carefully observed the village as they cautiously inched around it in a wide circle. As they were preparing to leave with their information they suddenly encountered a pound of Indian horses.

Under cover of darkness they quietly attempted to steal some of the horses, but one of the animals became frightened, and soon dogs began to bark. Kenton quickly tore down part of the fence, shot his gun to scatter the horses and the men rode off into the night.

They had succeeded in capturing seven horses, but because they had aroused the Indians, they were forced to flee in great haste and rode all night. At daybreak they reached the Ohio River. The three men would be relatively safe once they crossed the river but the wind was high and the waves rolled ominously.

While Clark and Montgomery began making a raft, Kenton plunged into the choppy water leading the horses behind him. But the rough water separated him from the frightened animals who quickly turned back towards the bank. Repeated efforts could not induce the horses to cross the river. The men could have saved their own lives by crossing the Ohio and leaving the animals behind, but unwilling to part with their prizes, they determined to wait until sunset in hopes that the river would become more calm.

The men should have moved either up or downstream to put more distance between them and the pursuing Indians. Instead they hobbled their horses and "stupidly sat down (where they were) until sunset...but at night the wind blew harder than ever." Not a moment more should have been lost, but the men remained where they were, spent the night, and the next morning made another attempt to lead the horses across the river. The Ohio was now calm, but the animals again balked, being anxious from the experience of the previous day.
The situation was now desperate, and the men resolved to each select one horse and ride down the Ohio to the Falls, leaving the other horses behind. But after turning the animals loose “greed overtook them and they decided to take all the horses.” Considerable time was wasted in recapturing the horses and during this period the three men became separated.

Kenton heard a loud halloo behind him and instead of fleeing, he “put the last capping stone to his imprudence,” by dismounting and walking towards the place where he heard the sound. He soon encountered five Indians and raising his rifle he fired at the foremost one, but his gun flashed. He began to run, but one of the Indians galloped up to him and cried out, “Brother, brother.” Unarmed, Kenton allowed the Indian to grab his hands, hoping that he would be friendly, but the Indian held him tightly until others arrived and pinioned his arms.

Clark made his escape by crossing the river on a log, but Montgomery was overtaken and killed. Kenton heard the shot that killed his friend, and soon afterwards the Indians returned with Montgomery’s scalp and slapped it, “still warm and reeking with blood, in Kenton’s face.” Next the Indians lashed Kenton with hickory ramrods and switched him from beech trees, shouting, “You want Injun hoss, hay! You damn hoss-steal, you!” Then they urinated on him and threw dirt in his face and on his body.

One of the stolen horses was a fine young half-broken colt and Kenton was fastened onto the horse with his wrists tied behind him and his feet tied under the horse’s belly. Kenton sat facing backwards and a halter was tied around his neck and attached to the horse’s neck. Suddenly the horse was released and given a sharp lash. Kenton struggled to keep his balance; if he fell the halter could hang him. He was rocked smartly by the colt and his head and body received deep cuts from overhanging branches the horse crashed into.

Kenton’s first night was spent in the open, staked out in a spread eagle fashion. A rawhide halter was tied around his neck so that he could not even turn his head. His naked body, cut and bruised, was exposed to the weather, gnats, ants, flies and mosquitoes. The following day his whimsical captors tied him to the colt again, but this time he faced forward and the horse did not buck. In this fashion he was led back towards Chillicothe Old Town, where sentence awaited him.

On his second night Kenton was again staked out in the same uncomfortable fashion, and in this posture he witnessed the Indians dance around the bloody scalp of Montgomery:

A horrible sight indeed it was. The blood clotted, stiffened and dried all over the hair. They obtained a tall, smooth pole, the scalp was attached to one end and the other end of the pole was set into the earth. Their chieftain gives the Indian yell, the warriors raise the war-whoop. Thus the war dance begins, the warriors commence twisting and

Kenton could well imagine the fate that awaited him.

He resumed his journey on the third day and arrived near Chillicothe Old Town late in the afternoon. The Indians made camp about a mile from the town and that night about 150 Indians gathered around the prisoner; they danced and sang, stopping on occasions to beat and kick him or spit in his face, and left him that night to suffer the attacks of “vorous insects.”

The following day Kenton was brought into Chillicothe Old Town where he was to run the gauntlet. The Indians, waiting to greet him with their clubs, formed a double row over 400 yards long which led to the council house. If Kenton was knocked down before he reached the house he would have to start over.

Although the accounts of Kenton’s run vary, he apparently got close to the council door twice, before being knocked down. The second time a “large, cold-faced squaw” knocked him senseless with a large wooden baton. Then other Indians savagely pounded him as he lay on the ground.

He was then dragged into the council house where he was staked out. Later when he regained consciousness, an Indian approached him and began a conversation:

Indian: “Don’t you know that the Great Spirit don’t love people who steal?”

Kenton: “No, did you know it?”

Indian: “Yes... Indians have got no cattle about their doors like white people: the Buffalo are our cattle, but you come here and kill them: you have no business to kill Indian’s cattle. Did you know that?”

Kenton: “No, I did not.”

Following this exchange, the Indian whipped Kenton telling him it was for stealing horses.

Other Indians tormented Kenton by jabbing him with glowing coals, loosening his fingernails and beating him. Finally “a squaw deliberately seated herself upon the face of our hero who...gave his teeth a death like set somewhere in the region of her inexpressibles (inexpressibles) and held a death like grip with his teeth... She began to screech, scream and yell like a loon.”

The Indians held a council the next day to decide what to do with Kenton. Some wanted to execute him at Wapatomi, some fifty miles north of Chillicothe Old Town. The Indians wanted to show off their prisoner to other Shawnees, since Kenton was a well known frontiersman.

The trip began the following day, after Kenton had been informed of his fate. The Indians seemed to be more friendly towards him because
of his calm acceptance of his fate and also because of his spirited attack on the squaw. Kenton, however, had determined to make his escape. Time and again, "seeing a distant tree or landmark, he told himself he would dash to his freedom then—but as he reached it his heart would fail him." 25

Soon the Indians reached New Pickaway Town where Kenton had to run another gauntlet. He was subjected to "witchings, cudgelings and pouning" and then was tied to a stake near the council house door while the warriors circled him "yelling and screaming." 27

His next destination was Mackachack, twenty eight miles away. During his journey to this village, the party reached King's Creek and the Indians tumbled Kenton face down into the stream and used him as a bridge "stomping down hard when they stepped on his head." 29

Kenton was almost drowned, but he was pulled out of the water and was revived by a sound beating. A negro with the party "attempted to crow in imitation of a rooster over Kenton's humiliation." 30

The inevitable gauntlet awaited him at Mackachack and Kenton resolved again to make his escape. Near the end of the line, he broke through the ranks and sped into the woods. The astonished Indians stood by mutely, thus enabling him to get a good lead. A swift runner, Kenton was out of sight after two miles, and he ran breathlessly for his life.

Suddenly he ran into a party of mounted Indians who were riding to Mackachack to see the prisoner. The Indians, led by Bluejacket, were amazed to see Kenton so soon, but they reacted quickly and one of them gave Kenton a "severe blow with the pipehead of his tomahawk, cutting through his scalp." 32

Simon fell unconscious to the ground. The Indians had just revived him and were leading him back to Mackachack when they were met by the pursuing warriors, who angrily beat the poor Kenton until he was rendered senseless again.

Kenton was now resigned to death. The Shawnees nursed him back to health, but his fighting spirit had collapsed. In later years he reflected that this was one of his darkest periods. He knew that after his recovery, he would run another gauntlet, be tortured and burned to death. It was during this time that Blackfish, recently returned from Kentucky, questioned him: "Young man, did Captain Boone send you here to steal horses?" Kenton replied: "No, he did not, but I stole them because you steal our horses." 33

Kenton's next destination was Wapatomica, where still another gauntlet line awaited him. He received a sound beating and was then tied inside the large council house. The Indians painted his face black as was customary with victims doomed to the stake. Then a young Indian boy began touching the prisoner with a burning stick; Kenton waited his opportunity and gave the boy "a kick that sent him whirling." 36

A squaw, possibly the boy's mother, briskly applied a thorn bush on Kenton.

Other tortures, such as pulling out his fingernails, cutting off his eyelids or prying out his ribs, were not uncommon, and perhaps awaited Kenton, but the Indians suddenly left their prisoner when they heard shouts of one of their war parties returning with prisoners. Simon Girty led the party of brave and renegade whites, and they brought with them a captured white woman and her seven children. 38

Kenton recognized Girty, "his old friend and companion on Dunmore's Campaign four years previously." 39

"Girty interviewed Kenton and promised to do everything in his power to save him. Girty turned to the council and made an inspired appeal. He said that Kenton was his "ancient comrade" and that they "after the Indian custom, had selected each other as special friends." 41

Kenton later described the bond they had made: "Girty and I pledged ourselves, one to the other, hand in hand, for life and death, when there was nobody present in the wilderness but God and us." 42

The Indians were moved by Girty's words and they decided to vote again on Kenton's fate. The vote was close, but this time Kenton's life was spared. He was now called brother and formally adopted into the tribe. 43 He was taken to a stream where his white blood was ceremonially washed away and he was given the name Cuttahotha, "The Blackened or Condemned Man."

Girty took Kenton to his quarters and obtained a full suit of clothes and other items for him, including a horse and saddle. Kenton was now at liberty to roam from town to town at his leisure and recover from his bruises and harsh treatment. 44 He doctor himself by applying warm grease to his wounds.

Girty told Kenton why he had become a Tory. At Fort Pitt a certain Captain Neville had him imprisoned for allegedly having intercourse with the Indians. He was later released, but was discriminated against. Because of this unfair treatment, he and several other men, including Alexander McKee and Matthew Elliott, went to Detroit where Henry Hamilton, the British commander, welcomed their service.

Kenton asked him if he did not feel remorse over killing some white people during a recent excursion. Girty hesitated and explained that the victims were only Scotch-Irish—a humble people, of not much account." 45

Some of the Indian towns that the two comrades visited included Blue Jacket's Town, McKee's Town, Buckongahela's Town and Solomon's Town. They were in the latter town, some twenty days after Kenton had been freed, when Girty heard a whoop. He immediately recognized it as the "distress hallow," and knew they must obey it. They soon saw a party of Indians with Red Pole at their head. He shook hands with Girty, but scowled at Kenton. 47

Kenton and Girty were taken to Wapatomica where a large gathering of Indians had assembled to re-determine Kenton's fate. Red Pole and his warriors had recently suffered a defeat in western Virginia and they had decided to vent their anger on Kenton. None of the Indians would shake his hand.

Girty, when he realized what was happening, made an appeal for Kenton's life, but his audience was sullen and unmoved. Red Pole deman-
ded Kenton’s death and “an over-whelming majority decided to remove him to the stake.” 48 Girty was dejected and said to Kenton, “Well, my friend, you must die; I do not see what more I can do for you, but will not cease to use every exertion.” 49 Kenton was dumbfounded.

Girty then suggested that since there were large numbers of Indians at Upper Sandusky, 50 Kenton should be taken there for execution. This measure was agreed upon and the Indians prepared their prisoner for the fifty mile trip. Tying his hands behind him and fastening a rope around his neck, five mounted Indians drove Kenton on foot before them. 51

Girty promised Kenton he would speak in his behalf in the next village and rode past him. Kenton and his guards proceeded to Silver Creek and there stopped to drink. After he finished drinking, Kenton crossed the creek and sat down on the other side. One of the Indians, irritated because Kenton had moved without orders, struck him savagely with a war club. Later on the trail, the party passed an Indian and his wife and upon learning Kenton was a horse thief, the Indian struck him with an ax. One of the blows Kenton received that day shattered his collarbone. 52

Finally the hapless prisoner arrived at Logan’s village. 53 There he spent the night, and the friendly Mingo chief, Logan, fed him well and treated him kindly. “Young man,” said Logan, “you have been stealing these peoples’ horses, and they are very mad at you.” Kenton agreed: “Yes, they seem very mad.” Logan then lifted his spirits by saying: “Well, I am a chief; I will send two men to Sandusky to speak good for you.” 54

The next morning Logan brought Kenton some bread and meat, but gave him no indication of what awaited him. Kenton’s hopes vanished as he was driven forward again on his journey. Halfway between Logan’s village and Upper Sandusky, a group of young Indians met Kenton and forced him to run still another gauntlet.

Soon after this ordeal, as Kenton later told his story, he began to “meet troops of boys painted black and mounted on fine horses who would ride round me, and dart off with most terrific shouts and screams.” 55 He finally reached Upper Sandusky where mercifully no gauntlet awaited him, but the “stake and fagot were promised him the next day.” 56

The following day a severe storm dampened the ring of firewood laid down for his execution. “The superstitious Indians felt the Great Spirit was angry with them.” 57 Accordingly they held a council to reconsider Kenton’s case, but it was decided to proceed with the execution when the wood was dry enough to burn.

At that juncture Pierre Druillard appeared. He was an interpreter for the British at Detroit and conveyed presents and rum to the Indians. 58 He was dressed in a scarlet uniform, trimmed with gold braid, which made him appear to the Indians as one clothed with great authority. He informed them that General McIntosh, an American general, was approaching from Fort Pitt with a large army. His orders were to take any white captives to Detroit for questioning.

He was authorized to pay the Indians one hundred dollars worth of tobacco, powder or other goods for “loaning” the prisoner to him. After he had taken Kenton to Detroit, and the authorities had questioned him, the Indians could have their prisoner back and do with him what they wished. 59 The Indians agreed to this plan, and sent one of their chiefs to Detroit who was to return with Kenton. They proceeded north by canoe, down the Sandusky River to the Bay of Sandusky, and thence by way of Lake Erie continued to Detroit. 60

When Kenton arrived in Detroit he was examined by a British doctor. His shoulder was not healing properly and it had to be rebroken and reset. The operation was quite painful. Next Kenton was cleaned, his bruises were treated, and his hair, matted with blood, was cut. He was now ready for his interview with Captain Lernoult, who was the commander during Hamilton’s absence. 61

Lernoult gained little information from Kenton, but as the British at this time were more interested in the Illinois country than Kentucky, the commander did not question him too closely. Kenton was not imprisoned; he was given permission to go wherever he wanted so long as he did not try to leave Detroit. He was turned over to Captain McGregor, who was in charge of the town militia, and was given clothes and was put on half rations. McGregor told Kenton he was to report every Sunday at nine o’clock to answer roll call, and that he was at liberty to work where he pleased.

Kenton learned that the Indian who had accompanied Druillard and him to Detroit was waiting to take him back, but the British assured him that the Indian would soon leave. As they predicted the Indian, after receiving a hundred dollars in goods, waited for a few more days, grew impatient, and left.

Simon saw many Indians in Detroit, and they often brought many scalps. He later told John H. James that the British commander received the scalps and thanked the Indian “in such a way as to show his wish to receive more. He took the tomahawk, and pretending to whet it, said, you have dulled it, and it is now sharp, go and dull it again. The Indians received many presents and whatever they wished.” 62

Kenton became friendly with a trader, John Edgar, and his wife, Rachel. He spent many hours at Edgar’s trading post and found Mrs. Edgar sympathetic and friendly. As he grew to know her better, he felt that she would assist him if he tried to escape. It was then winter, and Kenton had not recovered from his injuries, but by spring he would have regained his strength. And so he began making plans for his escape.

He learned from Captain McGregor that almost all the captives trying to escape by going south had been recaptured, and the best route to take was west towards the Wabash. 63 Kenton made other observations, and formulated his plan carefully. Soon the winter snows would melt, and the lilacs, of which the French were so fond, would be in bloom.

In June, 1779, Kenton was ready. He had found two other men eager to accompany him, and Mr. and Mrs. Edgar gave him many needed supplies. Kenton later described his escape to James:
Mrs. Edgar had given me a rifle, a pouch of musket balls and a horn full of powder. When I got the gun and went back to a swamp... the officers on horseback were shooting ducks and their servants picking them up. So I had to be very cautious. We set out and travelled fourteen nights laying by all day until we got somewhere near where Fort Wayne now is.

Kenton took a supply of dried meat, and during his journey killed several opposums and coons. He guided his companions by the “cluster of seven stars,” and gave them encouragement when they lagged behind. After they reached Fort Wayne, they began travelling by day. Kenton’s exact route south is uncertain, but early in July, after about a month in the wilderness, he once again stood facing the Ohio River. Across the river stood an American fort and this time Kenton did not hesitate to cross.

NOTES

1. Kenton was a well known frontiersman in the Kentucky, Ohio and western Virginia area. Accounts of his captivity by the Shawnee Indians have appeared in a number of magazines and books over the years, beginning in 1812 when Humphrey Marshall published his History of Kentucky. A thirty two page account of Kenton’s life appeared in John McClung’s Sketches of Western Adventure, published in 1832. John McDonald devoted seventy pages to Kenton’s story in his Biographical Sketches (1838), and Cecil B. Hartley treated Kenton in a sixty page sketch in his Life of Lewis Wetzel (1860). Later writers such as Theodore Roosevelt and William Hayden English stressed Kenton’s importance in the general westward movement, but added little in the way of detail to previous accounts. The first scholarly study of Kenton’s life was Edna Kenton’s Simon Kenton published in 1930. It remained the standard account until 1967 when Allan Eckert’s The Frontiersmen was published. The most important source for any period in Kenton’s life is the Draper Manuscripts, a remarkable collection compiled by Lyman C. Draper during the nineteenth century.

2. Draper MSS., Archives, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin, 2 BB 16. George Clark or Clarke is not to be confused with George Rogers Clark. At least one writer made this error: C. C. Graham, whose article, “Pioneer Life: Simon Kenton,” appeared in the Louisville Monthly Magazine (March, 1879), pp. 125-32. Allan Eckert, The Frontiersmen (Boston, 1867), p. 162, wrote that Clark, who was short and fat, was “in a state of perpetual fear one step removed from panic.”

3. Chillicothe Old Town was situated on the Little Miami River, some thirteen miles south of present day Springfield, Ohio, or about three miles north of Xenia, Ohio. It should not be confused with present day Chillicothe.

4. Draper MSS., 2 BB 17.


6. Draper MSS., 2 BB 18.


8. They were near Ripley, Ohio. See Eckert, pp. 164, 596 n5.


11. Ibid. Hartley wrote that Kenton saw three Indians and one white man, but the other accounts indicate he saw five Indians. Patricia Jahns, The Violent Years (New York, 1962), p. 102, wrote that the Indians knocked him off his horse, but it is evident from the other sources that Kenton had dismounted before he actually saw the Indians.

12. Kenton was not sure if these Indians were the ones whose horses he had stolen. The account of his capture in Eckert, pp. 164-65, is somewhat different.


16. Draper MSS., 2 BB 67. Hartley’s account of the colt ride on p. 137 was well done; he wrote that the horse “executed a few curvettes and caprioles” but soon fell into “a line with the other horses.” Draper’s MSS., 12 BB 120, indicates that the horse was not as spirited as suggested by Jahns, p. 103, and E. Kenton, p. 110.

17. From Asal Owen, Narrative of Simon Kenton, as quoted in Draper
18. Hartley, p. 137, maintained that Blackfish talked to Kenton that night, but this could not have happened as Blackfish had not yet returned from the Boonesborough campaign. Coleman, “Simon Kenton,” p. 299, made the same error.


21. It is possible this took place at Wakatomica, but most of the evidence indicates it occurred at Chillicothe Old Town. See Draper MSS.,” BB 10.

22. Eckert, p. 174, identified the Indian in this dialogue as Blackfish, the principal chief of the Shawnee nation; E. Kenton, p. 108, maintained the Indian was Bonah; Jahn, p. 109, felt it was a medicine chief. The story was originally told by Simon Kenton to John H. James who simply referred to Kenton’s interrogator as “an Indian.” See Draper MSS., 5 BB 104.

23. From Asa Owen’s account of Kenton, as quoted in Draper MSS., 7 BB 63. Jahn, p. 110, enlarged on this incident by stating that the squaw urinated on Kenton who bit “out a chunk of her flesh.” Eckert, p. 182, placed the event in Wakatomica and wrote that Kenton attacked the squaw because she was preparing to “defecate upon him.”

24. The present day Zanesfield, Ohio.

25. Draper MSS., 2 BB 23. Hartley, p. 141, wrote that Kenton tried to escape at this time and succeeded in breaking away and outdistancing his captors, before running into a “fresh party of horsemens.” This is more than doubtful as Kenton was carefully guarded and bound during these trips. William Renick of Greenbrier County, West Virginia, wrote Dr. Draper on January, 1867, that Kenton tried to escape while running the gauntlet in New Pickaway Town: “he knocked one Indian down and jumped into the river and would have escaped, but for a horsemans.” This story is also doubtful; Draper, MSS., 2 BB 12, maintained it was at Mackachack that Kenton tried to escape, as described in the text.

26. Sometimes called Piqua. It was located on the Mad River, a few miles west of present day Springfield, Ohio.

27. Draper MSS., 2 BB 20.

28. Mackachack was situated near present day West Liberty, Ohio.


31. It is difficult to determine how many times Kenton was forced to run the gauntlet. Estimates range from eight to thirteen.

32. Draper MSS., 2 BB 23.

33. As told to John H. James by Kenton in 1833. James visited Kenton at his house in Logan County, Ohio, and spent two days getting notes. In 1857 he gave the transcripts to Dr. Draper. See Draper MSS 5 BB 104. Kenton complained to James that McClung in his Sketches of Western Adventure (1832) wrote that Kenton said “sir” to Blackfish. Kenton emphatically told James: “I never ‘sirred’ an Indian in my life.”

34. Edna Kenton, p. 119, wrote that Kenton probably received a second skull wound at this time, but Draper’s manuscript indicates that he received this wound at a latter date.

35. The council house was a wooden structure, 150 feet long, seventy five feet wide and sixteen feet high.

36. Draper MSS., 2 BB 24. Edna Kenton, p. 118, had this incident take place in Mackachack.

37. Girty was a well known white frontiersman who was fighting with the Indians against the Americans.

38. Draper MSS., 2 BB 25. The woman was Mrs. Rachel Kennedy, not Mary Kennedy as stated by Hartley, p. 142. The war party also returned with seven scalps.

39. Draper MSS., 2 BB 25.

40. Ibid. Jahn, p. 117, wrote that Girty didn’t recognize him at first and Kenton cried out: “Girty, its me — Simon Butler.” Girty had known him as Butler, not Kenton.

41. Draper MSS., 2 BB 26.

42. Draper MSS., 2 BB 27.

43. Draper MSS., 2 BB 28. Draper maintained that he was adopted by
Girty; Edna Kenton, p. 124, suggested he was adopted by an Indian squaw, but this contention has no basis.

44. Draper MSS., 2 BB 28.
45. Ibid., 2 BB 29.
46. Blue Jacket’s Town was located at the modern day site of Bella-fontaine, Ohio.
47. Draper MSS., 2 BB 29.
48. Ibid., 2 BB 30.
49. Ibid.
50. The present day Upper Sandusky, Ohio. Sometimes the Indian town was simply called Sandusky.
51. Draper MSS., 2 BB 31.
52. Ibid. Edna Kenton, p. 128, maintained that Kenton’s arm was broken at Silver Creek and the other Indian (on the trail) broke his collarbone. Thus Simon, by her account, would have received two broken bones. Hartley, p. 149, stated that Kenton received only one fracture, a broken collar bone. Jahns’ account, p. 122, of this incident is misplaced chronologically and is confusing. Draper’s manuscript does not clear up these contradictions.
53. Logan’s village was located on the Scioto River, some six miles below present day Kenton, Ohio.
54. John H. James Notes in Draper MSS., 5 BB 102.
55. Ibid.
56. Draper MSS., 2 BB 33.
57. Ibid. This incident has been dramatized by many authors. Jahns, p. 124, wrote that Kenton’s face was painted black and he was being dragged through the fagots when the storm broke: “It came with such force that it killed birds.” Edna Kenton, p. 132, pictured Kenton tied to the stake, feeling the flames, when “the heaviest rainstorm he had ever experienced” fell from an “almost cloudless” sky. Simon Kenton later stated that “he was never tied to the stake” and was painted black only before being rescued by Girty. See Draper MSS., 2 BB 42.
58. E. Kenton, p. 133.
59. Draper MSS., 2 BB 34. Draper wrote that Logan’s messengers informed Druillard about Kenton’s execution and E. Kenton, p. 133, saw no reason to question this. Jahns, however, wrote, p. 126, that it was more likely that Girty informed him, although she didn’t discount the possibility that Logan’s messengers reached him; “it is also possible,” she wrote, “that no one sent Druillard and that his saving Simon was a coincidence.” Hartley, p. 150, felt the rescue was a coincidence, but Simon Kenton always believed that Logan’s messengers informed Druillard. See Eckert, p. 191.
60. Detroit was a fortified British town, but most of the settlers were French.
61. Henry Hamilton was at this time en route to the Illinois country where after an initial success he would be defeated and captured by George Rogers Clark.
62. John H. James notes, see Draper MSS., 5 BB 117.
63. Draper MSS., 2 BB 35.
64. Nathaniel Bullock and Jesse Copher (or Coffer).
66. Draper MSS., 2 BB 36.
67. Fort Nelson, the present day Louisville, Kentucky. Some authors have recounted many colorful incidents on Kenton’s escape from Detroit in which he encountered Indians, but Kenton said that “We didn’t see an Injun on all our journey to the Ohio.” See Edna Kenton, p. 142.
WEST LIBERTY CEMETERY – REFLECTIONS ON THE
VALUES OF OUR PAST

by

David Albert Molnar

The West Liberty cemetery, marked by a wrought-iron nameplate arch at its entrance, is located 100 feet off Route 88, about 50 yards from the juncture of Route 88 and the West Liberty-Harvey Road. The grounds are neglected; tombstones have been toppled by vandals and litter, mainly beer containers, is strewn about. There are about four hundred people interred in the cemetery. The oldest legible marker dates from 1786 (the grave of David McClure). The cemetery was last used for a 1946 burial.

There are four legible markers from the 18th century: 1786, 1793, 1793 and 1799, and only five 20th century markers among the 150 remaining memorials: 1903, 1919, 1922, 1926 and 1946.

Of particular interest in any old cemetery are the epitaphs inscribed on the headstones, which reflect the values of their time: close family ties, faith in God, and hope for mankind’s salvation are the primary memorial themes. This is in marked contrast to the cold, impersonal, and indifferent nature of contemporary memorials. The old stones reflect the lost association of age with wisdom; modern culture is more youth-oriented. Today we lose the values that were so revered in our American past.

Some tombstones, such as those of Emanuel N. Davis and Ann Blair, warn of their imminent demise:

In memory of Emanuel N Davis
who departed this life
Oct 15th 1841
Aged 1 years and 6 months
the son of
Samuel and Elizabeth Davis
"Remember Youth
as you pass by
that I was young
yet had to die"

(sarcophagus cover of)
Ann Blair
Died February 5 1811
"By this ye living learn
that soon or late
Death also ran our lot

And the next opening grave
may yawn for you"

A little digging around the base of a partially sunken stone revealed Henry Davis’ explanation of his final tribulation:

"Affliction sore I long bore
physician was in vain
Till God was pleased to give me ease
And free me from my pain"

But alas;

(marble obelisk)
Jane Smith
Born March 15 1811
Died May 27 1888

"Why do we mourn for dying friends
Or shake at death’s alarm
Tis but the voice that Jesus sends
To call them to his arms"

A flawlessly preserved 5’ cast-iron obelisk preserves the memory of:

Menerv Francis
daughter of Robert and C.A. White
Died July 5, 1877
26 yrs old
"She has gone and left us
And her loss we deeply feel
'Tis but God who has bereft us
He can all our sorrows heal"

The old adage “the evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones” does not apply to:

(sarcophagus cover of)
Robert McClure Esq.
Died March 14 1820
Age 64 yrs

"He was an affectionate husband
a good Citizen and faithful friend
His death will be long and much
Regretted"
Apparently, a very friendly preacher lived in the area:
Mr. Smiley Hughes
Preached the Gospel
Died Aug 19 1799

A parent's hope for their little one's salvation:
Montgomery W(?)
Died July 1 1861

"I am Jesus little lamb
therefore glad and happy I am"

According to information gleaned from the legible markers, 47 of the deceased were 75 years old plus at death.
The person who lived the longest is:

Soldier of the Revolution
John Curtis
Died July 25, 1843
aged 93 years
1st Sgt Co A (?) MD
Spring 1776-Fall 1779
Wounded during the War

Maria Bane (Jan 17 1808 to May 16 1898) and Diana, wife of A. Hedges (Died March 3 1879 aged 91 yrs) are the other nonagenarians represented in the cemetery.

The median age of all the 75 year-old plus people is 82.5 years. 36 gravestones mark the graves of youths 20 years old or younger. We can infer then that the rural environment contributed to longevity, unusual in those pre-penicillin appendectomy days.

Four Revolutionary War veterans, seven War of 1812 veterans, and eight Civil War veterans are memorialized in West Liberty Cemetery. They Are:

REVOLUTIONARY WAR
(Small metal plaque – Wheeling chapter DAR)
General Benjamin Biggs
1753-1823
Revolutionary Soldier

Wm Brown
US Soldier
Revolutionary War

John Curtis
(previously described)

CIVIL WAR
(on east side of octuple burial family marble obelisk)

Robert Anderson
Born Oct 15 1834
Killed in Battle June 15 1864

GA Biggs
Co F
135th Ohio Inf

Edw'd Carney
Snow's Va Mil
Rev War

WAR OF 1812

Cap't Archy Armstrong
Va Mil L inf
War 1812

Geo. Brown
US Soldier
War 1812

Jas Darling
Phillips Pa
Mil War 1812

Jas Dixon
US Soldier
War of 1812

Cap't Jas Johnson
Gusque's SC
Mil War 1812

Corpl Levi Mills
2 NY Mil
War 1812

Bernard Weidman
(?)
War 1812
Col GW Curtis
CSA
Killed in the battle
at Slaughter Mt
Aug 10 1862
(His wife died five days later on Aug 15, 1862 and rests beside him)

Col WB Curtis
12 W Va Inf

J A Kelley
Co 16
12 US UI

Hos Muray
(?)
186 OHIO Inf

Serg't
Henry Spear
Co D
12 W Va Inf

Soldier Jos. Verse
Co. D
(?) C T

Unfortunately, many people forget that cemeteries are a valuable repository of historical information, as evidenced by the rampant vandalism in not only this cemetery, but many other ancient cemeteries throughout the country. Hopefully, West Liberty residents will come to the realization that this cemetery reflects the community’s colorful and historical past, and institute regular maintenance and protection of the grounds. Perhaps the above-gathered information may help future historians in their research.

A COMPILATION OF ARTICLES ABOUT WHEELING IN
THE UPPER OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW,
1968-1981

by
Kenneth R. Nodyne

The Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review is a local history journal devoted to the presentation of a profile of the Wheeling community over more than two hundred years in its history. Articles covering every aspect of community life — political, economic, cultural, social, sports, religious, among others — have been presented. It is the policy of the editorial board to continue and expand upon these subjects.

This compilation is intended to make the reader aware of the multitude and variety of articles which have appeared in the Review over the past thirteen years and of the availability of some back issues. Those interested in obtaining back issues may send $2 per issue ($1.50 plus fifty cents cover and postage charge) to the editor. The Review has been on a regular semi-annual publication schedule since 1975 and it has been printed and illustrated in its present form by West Liberty State College since 1977.

Listed below is a summary of the availability of back issues:

Volume I No. 1
(October 26, 1968)
Volume II No. 1
(November, 1972)
Volume II No. 2
(August, 1973)
Volume III, No. 1
(July, 1974)
Volume IV, No. 1
(Winter, 1975)
Volume IV, No. 2
(Spring, 1976)
Volume V, No. 1
(Autumn 1976)
Volume V, No. 2
Volume VI, No. 1
Volume VI, No. 2
(Spring, 1977)
Volume VII, No. 1
(Autumn-Winter, 1977)
Volume VII, No. 2
(Spring-Summer, 1978)

In stock (Only water-soiled issues available).
No more available.
In stock
No more available.
In stock
No more available.
These two numbers were never printed. Due to a clerical error these numbers are skipped.
In Stock
No more available.
In stock.
Volume VIII, No. 1
(Autumn-Winter, 1978)
Volume VIII, No. 2
(Spring-Summer, 1979)
Volume IX, No. 1
(Autumn-Winter, 1979)
Volume IX, No. 1
(Spring-Summer, 1980)
Volume X, No. 1
(Autumn-Winter, 1980)
Volume X, No. 2
(Spring-Summer, 1981)

In stock.
In stock.
In stock.
In stock.
In stock.
In stock.
In stock.

Listed below, arranged by time period is a complete list of all articles about Wheeling history which have appeared in the Review. Occasionally, the Review has printed articles not related to local history. These have been omitted from the compilation. Also omitted, have been a few reprints of newspaper articles. The volume number of each article is listed with the title and if the article is in an issue which is still available, the article has been starred with an asterisk (*).

Articles About Wheeling Up to 1840

"Bishop Van De Velde's Journey Down the Ohio, 1831"
Rev. Clifford M. Lewis, S.J. Volume I, No. 1*

"Eighteenth Century Paths, Roads or Trails!"
Deff Neona Volume I, No. 1*

"A Vignette of Wheeling In the Age of Jackson"
Dr. Kenneth Nodyne Volume II, No. 2*

"The Two Van Metre's Forts"
Richard Klein Volume IV, No. 1

"The Great Mound At Moundsville Is Getting Its Proper Setting"
Sam Shaw Volume IV, No. 2

"Van Metre's Fort: Further Notes On the History And A Progress Report On the Excavation"
Alan H. Cooper Volume IV, No. 2

"Black's Cabin and the Site of Ohio County's First Court"
Donald R. Strong and Richard S. Klein Volume V, No. 1

"Jesuits In Virginia, 1570-1850 A Brief Account"
Rev. Clifford M. Lewis, S.J. Volume VI, No. 2*

"Van Metre's Fort Excavation — Progress Report No. 2"
Alan H. Cooper Volume VI, No. 2*

"A Vignette of Wheeling During the Early Republic"
Dr. Kenneth Nodyne Volume VII, No. 1

"Frontier Warfare And Cultural Conflict"
Richard S. Klein and Alan Cooper Volume VII, No. 1

"The Foreman Massacre, September 27, 1877"
Alan Cooper and Richard Klein Volume VII, No. 2*

"Nation's Greatest Earthquakes: 1811-1812: Effect In Wheeling Reported by Shipbuilder Josiah Fox"
Rev. Clifford M. Lewis, S.J. Volume IX, No. 1*

"Career of Josiah Fox As Ship-Builder For the U.S. Navy: His Own Story"
Analyzed by Rev. Clifford M. Lewis, S.J. Volume X, No. 1*

"The Economy of Early Wheeling As Seen Through European Eyes"
Doug Fetherling Volume X, No. 2*

"The Captivity of Simon Kenton"
Dr. Rockne Ehle Volume X, No. 2*

1840-1860

"Opinions on Slavery In the Wheeling Area As Evidenced in the Papers of the Daily Intelligencer 1859-1860"
Jon Reed Donnelly Volume I, No. 1*

"Triumph From Tragedy: Charles Ellet, Jr. And the Collapse Of the Wheeling Suspension Bridge"
Rev. Clifford M. Lewis, S.J. Volume IV, No. 2

"Pennsylvania Vs. Wheeling and Belmont Bridge Company"
E. Douglas McKay Volume IX, No. 2*

"The Bridge" A Poem
Jack E. Harris Volume IX, No. 2*

1860 And After

"General Isaac Harding Duval"
Nancy Caldwell, Mrs. George W. Leonard, Volume IX, No. 2*
and George Leonard III

"The Goshorns of Wheeling: Rebel Sympathizers"
Dr. David Menard

Volume II, No. 1

"Sketch for A History of the Wheeling Symphony"
Dr. Kenneth R. Nodyne

Volume III, No. 1*

"The Frescoes of West Virginia Independence Hall"
Wayne Barte and Beverly Fluty

Volume IV, No. 1

"Once In A Lifetime Wheeling Celebrates the United States Centennial: 1876"
Dennis M. Lawther

Volume IV, No. 2

"Shades of Glory or Bark of the Buttonwood — The Wheeling Stock Exchange"
John Hazlett

Volume V, No. 1

"Francis H. Pierpont — A Man For Two States"
Rev. Clifford M. Lewis, S.J.

Volume V, No. 1

"Henrietta Fulks and the Suffragette Movement In Wheeling"
Mary L. Leibold

Volume V, No. 1

"The Vindication of Captain Keller"
Dennis Lawther

Volume VII, No. 2*

"The Laying of the Cornerstone of the West Virginia State Capitol"
Gary Baker

Volume VI, No. 2*

"Wheeling's Great Primitive Artist — Patrick Sullivan"
James Morris

Volume VII, No. 1

"The Pollack Memorial Monument"
Dr. David Javersak

Volume VII, No. 2*

"The Crash of the Shenandoah, September 3, 1925"
Robert W. Schramm

Volume VIII, No. 1*

"The Wheeling Saengerfeste of 1860 and 1885"
Dr. Edward C. Wolf

Volume VIII, No. 1*

"A Great Educator of the Upper Ohio Valley — Paul N. Elbin"
Dr. Kenneth R. Nodyne

Volume VIII, No. 1*

"Wheeling's Sunday Sensation: The 1889 Wheeling Nallers"

30

Dr. David T. Javersak

Volume VIII, No. 2*

"A Moment of Glory: The Wheeling Ironmen"
Dr. Arthur E. Barbeau

Volume IX, No. 1*

"Labor Day in Wheeling"
Dr. David T. Javersak

GENERAL

Volume IX, No. 1*

"The Lewis Bonnett Home"
Mrs. Irene Smith

Volume II, No. 2*

"Wheeling Days Are Happy Days"
Jessie M. Price

Volume III, No. 1*

"County Court Order Books"
E. Douglas McKay

Volume IV, No. 1

Candace Reed and John McRae

Volume V, No. 1

"Christmas In the Upper Ohio Valley"
Beverly Fluty

Volume V, No. 1

"Today's News Is Tomorrow's History: Newspapers in Ohio County"
Joseph E. Hoffman

Volume VII, No. 1

"Wheeling Artists of the Past"
Janice Stein

Volume VII, No. 2*

"The Sedgwick Museum, Martins Ferry, Ohio"
Annie Tanks

Volume VII, No. 2*

"In Honor of Father Lewis, First Editor of the Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review."
Robert Ramsey and Dr. Kenneth Nodyne

Volume VII, No. 2*

"The Germans of Wheeling: Part One"
Dr. William Seaman

Volume VIII, No. 2*

"The Germans of Wheeling: Part Two"
Dr. William Seaman

Volume IX, No. 1*

"The Study of Local History"
Dr. William F. Trimble

Volume X, No. 1*
"The End of Urbanization: A Critical Essay"
Dr. Richard T. Geruson
Volume X, No. 1*

"A Survey of Children's And Adolescents' Historical Fiction About the Upper Ohio Valley"
Dr. Maryann Ehle
Volume X, No. 1*

"West Liberty Cemetery: Reflections on the Values of Our Past"
David Albert Molnar
Volume X, No. 2*

"A Compilation of Articles About Wheeling History In the Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review, 1968-1981"
Dr. Kenneth R. Nodyne
Volume X, No. 2*

BOOK REVIEW:

The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society. By Thomas Connelly. (New York; Alfred A. Knopf. 1977 xv +249 pp. $10.00)

This is a book not about the flawless character of Robert E. Lee who stoically pronounced that "duty is the sublimest word in the English language", but about the efforts of a small coterie of compatriots to put a gloss of perfection on the military career of Lee. For reasons of their own they wanted to use Lee's reputation to raise money for Washington and Lee College, to stir up Southern nationalism, and to settle old scores. They sought to raise Lee to an elevated position in American hagiography. Virginians first, Southerners next, and finally Americans, everyone came to accept this group's version of Lee's military record. This was one of the most successful public relations feats in American history. Were Lee here today, he might rub his chin and wonder how history had been so severely distorted.

Thomas Connelly handles his material with a firm hand. He follows carefully the process by which J.W. Jones, Walter Taylor, Jubal A. Early, and others elevated the Lee of the Lost Cause to the number one Southern position. Connelly is no mere idolizer of the "marble" general. He understands the course by which Lee's difficult childhood and early marriage led to his severe self-doubts, deep agonizing, and by the 1850's, morose personality. The military action of the war is not the only theme, but the impression certain Southerners wanted to create of Lee's supposed role in the Civil War. A psychological structure was built in order to take liberties with the truth. Southerners were made to feel that the Virginian's contribution to the Confederate cause, was responsible for its brief glory. The mistakes and unglamorous elements of the war could be attributed to lesser men from different parts of the South. At the beginning, the propagandists were aware of the immensity of their task, but they were equal to it and succeeded. One of their obstacles which serves as an example, is the explanation of Lee's supposed defeat at Gettysburg. General Longstreet, a South Carolinian who delayed executing Lee's orders on the second day of the battle is given the blame for the desperation of Pickett's charge.

Connelly is not so successful in relating Lee's states of mind to his military behavior. These worked into repressions which Lee could release and work off through the rashness he showed at Malvern Hill and Gettysburg. However, Lee was always audacious as illustrated in the Mexican War when his personality was more vibrant and outgoing. He seems to play himself as worthless and ridden with faults and one letter in particular is taken to prove this condition. However, this is taken out of context.

There are several errors. On page 182 the quotation is incorrectly footnoted. On page 184 the quotation is correct, but the footnote is in error. The basic purpose of the propagandists is repeated in several chapters. This repetition could have been reduced somewhat.

There are small caviats compared to the great achievements of the book. Connelly's discussion of Lee's frustrations and anxieties make him not only a flesh and blood human being but a different and extraordinary one at the same time. He brushes away the verbiage of this group and shows us that Lee was not all that highly regarded during the war. Even as a converted secessionist he was heart and soul for the Southern cause. Yet the efforts of these Southerners, in an ironic fashion, helped to stimulate the research which has put Lee close to his true place in the hearts of all Americans.

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CONTRIBUTORS

DOUG FETHERLING was born in Wheeling in 1949 and was a reporter with The Intelligencer. Since then he has worked as an editor and writer in Britain and in Canada, where he now lives.

Fetherling is the author of a half dozen books including, most recently The Five Lives of Ben Hecht (a biography of the 1930's novelist and screenwriter) and Gold Diggers of 1929 (a study of the great stock market crash).

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Molnar hopes to be a free lance person. His initial interest in old cemeteries began when he fell into a collapsed grave spot while running during a Halloween prank.

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