

the most judicious economy; but she did so without complaining, and succeeded not only in raising, by her industry and frugality, a large family, but at her death left to them a small house and lot as an inheritance. When a girl in Philadelphia she was frequently employed as a seamstress in some of the prominent families of that place, which afforded her an opportunity of becoming acquainted with some of those men who, in after life, especially during the Revolutionary War, became conspicuous. Among those was Benjamin Franklin, of whose early career she frequently spoke. Her remains, as well as those of her husband, now rest in the same burial place, where rests the remains of her two sons, the place being marked with a head and a foot stone.

A General Knox Letter.*

Our President, Mr. Steinman, a few weeks ago became possessed of the following letter, written by General Henry Knox when he was Secretary of War. It has interest as having been written by one of the most illustrious soldiers of the Revolutionary period, and a special interest in that it was written to General Edward Hand, another illustrious soldier of that war, a resident of this county, whose country-seat, known as "Rockford," still stands on the banks of our beautiful river, the Conestoga. As if to add additional interest to the letter, the subject of it is one of the historic institutions of the last century, still remaining with us—the old Franklin College.

The letter is as follows:

265 War Office, 17th April, 1791,

Sir: By some mistake I find your letter of the 18th of January last has not been answered.

*A paper written by Frank R. Diefenderffer and read before the Lancaster County Historical Society on June 2, 1899.

An expectation of some general arsenals being permanently established has hitherto prevented the removal or disposal of the few public stores at Lancaster. The expectation still continues, but its accomplishment does not appear to be immediate. I must, therefore, leave it to your judgment, in case the College should demand the buildings or rent for the same, to make the best disposition of the stores, in case of being obliged to remove them, or bargain for the rent of the buildings in which they now are.

It will not be necessary to make any returns at stated periods; but only on occasions as changes, from any cause, shall happen.

I am sir,

With great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

H. KNOX.

The Hon'ble General Hand.

One of the questions that suggests itself after reading this letter is how the stores of the General Government should come to be stored in buildings belonging to the college, and that, too, four years after the founding of the college? Dr. Dubbs' address on "Old Franklin College," read before this Society on February 4, 1898, throws light on this question. He quotes an Act of the Legislature of the State, passed on the 27th day of February, 1788, by which "the public storehouse and two lots of ground in the borough and county of Lancaster were vested in the Trustees of Franklin College for the use of said institution." Dr. Dubbs further tells us this "storehouse was situated on North Queen street, near James street, on the ground now occupied by Franklin Row." Evidently those storehouses had been used continuously by the Government since Revolutionary times, and the question arose over the disposition of the stores in them at the period in question.

General Knox was born in Boston, on July 25, 1750, and was well educated in the schools of that city. He early evinced a taste for military affairs and at the age of eighteen was an officer in a military company. At twenty he became a book seller, but when the trouble with the Mother Country began he joined the army and fought gallantly at Bunker Hill, and rose to the rank of colonel by the time Washington joined the army.

Washington was much embarrassed for want of artillery to carry on the siege of Boston. Knox proposed to bring what was at Lake George and some old posts on the Canadian frontier. The scheme promised so little success that Washington discouraged it, but young Knox manifested so much enthusiasm that he was permitted to make the attempt. He set out in November with a detachment and returned in December, bringing with him on 42 sleds 13 brass and 26 iron cannon, 14 mortars, a barrel of flints and 2,300 pounds of lead, 55 guns in all, and as the procession marched into the American lines it was most enthusiastically received. These fifty-five guns were a most valuable addition to the besieging army and preparations were at once made to bombard Boston, but circumstances changed the plans. As a reward Knox was made a Brigadier General of artillery, and until the close of the war was in command of that arm of the service.

From that time forward he was the warm personal friend of Washington. Prior to the battle of Trenton he crossed the Delaware to march on that city. Halting where the rest of the army was struggling with the flood and floating ice, in the darkness, he stood on the shore and with his voice directed where the landings should be made. A few hours later his guns were pouring shot into the ranks of the bewild-

ered Hessians. He was regarded as a skilful artillery officer, but at Germantown he blundered and lost the battle for his country because he refused to pursue the fleeing enemy, while Chew's house, where several companies had taken refuge, remained untaken, he contending it was contrary to all military rules to leave a fortified position in one's rear. His artillery brigade was in the Encampment at Valley Forge. He fought at Monmouth and Brandywine, and was present at the taking of Yorktown. When Washington took farewell of his officers at New York, Knox was the first to advance and receive his parting embrace. He was made a Major General after the surrender of Yorktown, and in 1785 he was appointed by Congress Secretary of War, and held that office eleven years. The Navy Department was added to it, and he discharged the duties of both with marked ability. The salary, however, was inadequate, and he resigned, and removed to Maine, where his wife owned a tract of land. His death occurred in 1806, and was caused by accidentally swallowing a chicken bone. Knox was an honest, amiable man, of pure life, and, although ardent and impulsive, he was of sound judgment and cool in the hour of battle. The war for independence has, perhaps, no braver or more gallant soldier to show to us.

Of General Edward Hand, to whom this letter was written, it is not necessary to speak to a Lancaster audience. He was originally a surgeon, but he threw down the scalpel and took up the sword. He fought from the siege of Boston to the end of the war. At first only a Lieutenant Colonel, in command of a battalion of riflemen, he commanded two brigades in 1780, and was made Adjutant General of the army near the close of the war. He was an able soldier and a true patriot. He died in this city in 1802.

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