Adams County History 2006

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Adams County History 2006

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Cover Illustration: Image of George Arnold courtesy of ACHS

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Statement of Purpose

The Adams County Historical Society is committed to the preservation of the social, political, and religious history of the county and to the promotion of the study of history. Expressing its commitment, the society maintains museum displays a valuable library of publications, and manuscript material which includes estate papers, deed books, land surveys, and newspapers. In addition, it publishes important historical studies and reprints of earlier studies on Adams County, a newsletter, and a journal.

The editorial board of Adams County History encourages and invites the submission of essays and notices reflecting the rich history of Adams County. Submission should be typed double spaced and available in a pc compatible word processing format. Contributors should include a hardcopy and electronic copy of their work on a CD-ROM. Generally, style should conform to the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style. Contributors should retain copies of the typescript submitted. If return is desired, a self-addressed envelope with postage should be included.

Submissions and inquires should be addressed to:

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A county historical society plays many roles in the community it serves. Collecting and preserving original sources—the foundation for research illuminating facets of that county’s history surely counts among the most important of these roles. In publishing this journal for the past decade, featuring articles drawn from its rich trove of original sources, the Adams County Historical Society has contributed materially to the better understanding of our local history.

The two major contributions to this number of *Adams County History* represent different facets of a scholar’s repertoire. By examining the life and times of Gettysburg businessman George Arnold, Charles H. Glatfelter opens a window into Adams County’s 19th century climate for enterprise and its institutional maturation. Working with local newspapers, estate records, real estate deeds, and other original sources, Glatfelter relates the story of a man who by certain markers was not especially significant in the annals of Pennsylvania history. Yet George Arnold’s energetic pursuit of business opportunities, including his involvement in retail sales, banking, farming, and mill operations, touched a broad swath of valuable history. At the very least, Arnold’s activities remind us that the age of specialization had not yet arrived in Adams County by the middle of the 19th century.

Readers will learn, through the newspaper advertisements that Charles Glatfelter has examined, interesting information about the products a Gettysburg merchant could expect to market as well as the vicissitudes of business in a nascent capitalist economy. Glatfelter reminds readers that lawsuits and threats of suits were commonplace in nineteenth-century Adams County, and that declarations of bankruptcy were also common. The good old days were not so quiet and harmonious as some memories might suggest.

Even gambling (today a preoccupation of many citizens in the community, pro and con) was popular in Adams County. George Arnold’s business enterprises were made possible in great degree because he won a substantial sum in a state lottery.

The second piece we publish in this issue (focused on documents relating to this region before it became known as Adams County) explore a different realm of local life. By examining and reprinting documents by an unknown writer relating to the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794, to a second trip to Western Pennsylvania, and to family connections in the West, Bolin connects local history to national history in most interesting ways. His meticulous editing provides insight into the places mentioned in the diaries, the connections made, and the possible status of the diarist. He may (or may not) have been an officer in General Washington’s army. There is no question, however, that his account of his travels dovetails with the historical record of the government’s successful effort to assert its authority against the Whiskey Rebels.

Our final piece is a book review. Peter Vermilyea, author of an excellent account of John Hopkins in the 2005 number of *Adams County History*, here describes and assesses Bradley Roch’s new biography of Thaddeus Stevens. As Vermilyea shows, Hoch’s careful scrutiny of previously untapped sources provides a more textured view of the Great Commoner’s years living in Adams County.

Michael J. Birkner, *Editor*
INTRODUCTION

Several society staff members and volunteers participated in preparing this biography of George Arnold. We were searching for information to be used in an introduction to Arnold’s August 1863 letter to William T. King, which we hoped to publish eventually in some form. We assumed that the biography, which lacked the full documentation customarily used in this journal, would take its place in the society’s files, perhaps never again to be used. On second thought, we decided that the biography, including the letter, if slightly revised, would be of sufficient interest to warrant publication.

In its issue of March 13, 1879, the Gettysburg Compiler recorded the death on the preceding day, in town, of George Arnold, aged 80 years, 1 month, and 20 days. For almost sixty years, the editor wrote, Arnold’s name had been “identified with every public enterprise, and . . . he was known as one of our most active business men.” This obituary, although relatively brief, was still longer than most that appeared in either of the weekly Gettysburg newspapers of the time. It remained for the Star and Sentinel, in its issue of April 3, to publish an obituary of Arnold which occupied more than fifty inches of type. Its author began by observing that “a community is a family on a larger scale,” bound together by many ties, and that when a member identified with it “for nearly two-thirds of a century . . . is called away by the irrevocable summons from its midst,” his “life-work should not be left unchronicled.”

The author of this obituary identified himself as D. Mc. Obviously this was David McConaughy (1823-1902), a prominent Gettysburg attorney who from 1848 until her death in 1853 was married to a daughter of George Arnold. Although he remarried three years later, McConaughy maintained a close association with Arnold and was in an excellent position to write an accurate account of his long career. Arnold first arrived in Gettysburg about eight years before McConaughy was born. What he wrote about the early years was thus not based on personal knowledge, but it coincides with most of what can be learned from contemporary newspaper and tax records. Unless otherwise indicated, the quotations used in what immediately follows have been taken from the McConaughy obituary.
Born on January 20, 1799 on his father's mill property in Baltimore county, Maryland, George Arnold came to Gettysburg in 1815, when he was sixteen years old. According to McConaughy, he was responding to an invitation extended by William McClellan (1788-1845), member of an old Adams county family. On August 1, 1815 McClellan announced in the Gettysburg Centinel (its name was changed to Sentinel in 1826) that he had just opened a general store, with “an extensive and general assortment of merchandize,” (spelled as written) in Bernhard Gilbert’s new tavern on the northwest corner of Baltimore and Middle streets: the later Fahnestock property. While replenishing his inventory in Baltimore and Georgetown a short time later, McClellan met Arnold for the first time. “Attracted by his bright active look,” he offered the young man a position as his store clerk. Arnold accepted the invitation, came to Gettysburg, and for the next several years worked for McClellan, then for McClellan and Hersh, and finally for George Hersh (1791-1871).

In 1815 Gettysburg had about 100 houses and 900 inhabitants. It had become the seat of Adams County in 1800 and a borough six years later. Most of the residents lived on or south of the two streets running east and west through the diamond or square. Such later well-known buildings as the Wills house and the Bender house had not yet been built. The latter was constructed about three years later by John McConaughy (died 1824, aged 45), the leading attorney and father of David. Roads and turnpikes linked the town with places in all directions. There were five licensed taverns and several general stores. The Bank of Gettysburg, one of the first chartered banks west of the Susquehanna River, opened for business in May 1814. James Gettys (1759-1815), the founder and proprietor of the town, died early in 1815, a few months before Arnold’s arrival.

In August 1816 Thaddeus Stevens came to town and announced through the columns of the newspaper that he had begun the practice of law. He soon met George Arnold. The two formed a lasting personal friendship, which ended only with the death of Stevens in 1868. They shared the same quarters, both before and after Stevens purchased his first real estate, on Chambersburg Street, in 1818. This arrangement ended when Arnold married Ann Maria Jenkins on November 3, 1825.

Having begun his business career as a general store clerk, George Arnold decided to remain in that field. This did not prevent him from pursuing other ventures from time to time. As David McConaughy put it, he “continued merchandizing with short intervals, engrossed with other pursuits, up almost to his death.” Unlike some other merchants, past and present, he did not find a location for his business early in his career and remain in it for decades.

At the time of the 1821 septennial census, which was taken in mid-November of that year, George Arnold was still listed as a clerk. Then in May 1822 he announced in the Sentinel that he was “now opening, in the new brick house, situate on the south-
east corner of the diamond,” a cash store with “an extensive and general assortment of merchandize.” He explained that “every rational person must know that goods can and ought to be sold on better terms for cash, than when a general credit is given.” The spirit, and much of the exact wording of this advertisement, (afterwards written as ad) followed that used by William McClellan when he opened his store seven years earlier.

David McConaughty wrote that Thaddeus Stevens provided the money with which Arnold’s new building was built, on what he said had been a vacant lot. Incorrectly, he gave the date of the new store as 1820; it was 1822. The town lot in question (lot 7) had passed through several hands since James Gettys sold it in 1790. The first purchaser was Henry Arnold of Littlestown, a millwright and almost certainly George Arnold’s father. Thaddeus Stevens and William McClellan obtained a 99-year lease on the lot in 1822. Arnold acquired Stevens’s share five years later.

Because George Arnold regularly advertised in one or all of the three weekly newspapers in Gettysburg, and because microfilm of these papers is available in the collections of the Adams County Historical Society, it is possible to follow him closely as he moved from one location to the next, and to learn how the nature of his business changed significantly over time.

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This section traces Arnold’s mercantile career from 1822 to 1877, some fifty-five years. With but few exceptions, the spelling used in the newspaper quotations which follow is all lower case. In the original, there were many capital letters used. We do not need to repeat them here to entice the public into George Arnold’s store, wherever it might happen to be. See the map on page 27 for store locations.

Even in the 1820s there were occupational hazards for a Gettysburg merchant conducting his business. On November 1, 1824 George Arnold prepared a lengthy statement, which he titled the “most daring robbery,” and submitted it to the Sentinel for publication. On the morning of three days before, he wrote, he was attacked
while traveling west on the Philadelphia-Baltimore Road by a man who had spent the previous night in the tavern at which he had stopped. Leaving early the next morning, the robber “waited in the road until I came up.” He then asked for, and was granted, a ride. Instead of getting into what Arnold called his gig (a two-wheel, one-horse carriage), he seized the reins, “presented a pistol to my breast, and demanded all the money I had or he would shoot me instantly.” During the following few minutes, Arnold gave the robber a few dollars from his pocket, a silver watch, and saddlebags containing bank notes (some counterfeit), and items of clothing. “He then felt my pockets.” Arnold wrote, “but did not discover one in which I had a considerable amount of money.” At intervals during this encounter the robber threatened Arnold “with instant death.” Eventually, in a way he did not explain, he escaped. Returning to Gettysburg, he described his assailant in great detail, down to the color of his pantaloons (“near mouse”) and his “much turned down” ears (from the way he wore his hat). “It is easily discovered from his dialect.” Arnold wrote, “that he is from the East, and what is generally called a Yankee.” He offered a reward of $25 for his capture, either in Maryland or Pennsylvania.

David McConaughy, who was one year old when the robbery occurred, thought it important enough to discuss this incident as an example of Arnold’s “remarkable coolness, courage, and tireless persistency.” The Sentinel reported that the saddlebags were recovered along the road a few days after the robbery and that the perpetrator, whom McConaughy called John Hicks, was arrested and imprisoned in Philadelphia a few days later, with some of the loot still in his possession.

In January 1829 George Arnold announced that he was “determined to settle up his business” and asked all persons indebted to him to pay up promptly. In April he informed the public he was “now about to quit business, having sold out his whole stock of goods to Mr. John Stewart,” who will continue “at the same stand.” This arrangement did not work out as planned and Arnold remained in charge of the store. In January 1830 he announced that “having determined to quit business in the spring, I will now sell my whole stock of dry goods, at cost, for cash” and rent the storeroom and warehouse, as of April 1.
Arnold’s association with Mifflin Forge in Franklin County during 1830-1833 will be discussed in a later section.

In March 1833 Arnold used the columns of the newspaper “to inform his friends and the public generally that he has again opened store” and offers for sale an “entirely new and handsome assortment of fresh goods.” These included dry goods, groceries, china, glass, queensware, cutlery, and a complete assortment of bar and sheet iron, which he described in detail. In “a few days” he expected to receive from Philadelphia “a full and complete assortment of hardware and edge tools of every description.” His entire inventory had been purchased “at the lowest cash prices in Philadelphia and Baltimore.” This new store was located, not at his previous location, but in what Arnold called “Cobean’s three-story house, southeast corner of the diamond.” It is the present location of the Wills house.

Clearly the place of business which George Arnold opened in the spring of 1833 either had or would soon acquire a much larger and more varied inventory than was found in his first effort eleven years before. One might have expected that it was the beginning of a long and successful business at this place. Perhaps “his friends and the public generally” were surprised to read in the newspaper in February 1834 that, “having determined to remove from Gettysburg to Mercersburg, in the spring, I will now sell out my stock of goods cheap for cash.” During the next several months he also sold his interest in the real estate in which he had conducted his first store. On several occasions he inserted newspaper notices that he had left Gettysburg, after entrusting his books to Attorney Samuel R. Russell (1801-1894), to whom moneys due him should be paid.
A “last notice” appearing in April stated that “I am much in want of money” and that anyone who had not paid him by June 15 could expect to be sued.

Arnold’s “friends and the public generally” must have been surprised again and somewhat perplexed when they read, late in May 1834 and only three months after he was reportedly leaving for Mercersburg, that he had “again returned to his old stand in Gettysburg, with a splendid stock of fresh goods.” Several advertisements during the rest of the year featured shoes, boots, hosiery, caps, shawls, many fabrics, and hollowware, by which he meant pots and pans. His stock, he claimed, also embraced “almost every article in the way of building, and housekeeping.”

On April 1, 1835 George Arnold moved his store into rented space in the large building in the southwestern quarter of the diamond. Built by John McConaughy; it had been occupied for some time by merchants. Arnold remained here as a renter for seventeen years, during which time he established the Gettysburg Steam Foundry, which will be discussed in a later section. Between 1837 and 1840 he was in partnership with his brother William (died 1852, aged about 40) under the name George Arnold and Company. An 1847 ad announced a partnership with William F. Ruthrauff. This was of short duration.

During these seventeen years George Arnold’s inventory still included the dry goods, groceries, hardware, and related items which he had been selling since 1822. In 1851 he told the public that he had just returned from Philadelphia and Baltimore with more of the same.

As is usually the case, times were changing during these years and Arnold tried to keep up with them. As early as 1835 he advised that “persons engaged in building would do well to call” on him. Three years later he informed the public that he had “entered largely into the hardware business” and had available “almost every article in the way of building and housekeeping.” In 1839 he offered for sale new and superior cookstoves “manufactured at the Gettysburg foundry” and a patented coal stove which was “calculated for heating two rooms at one and the same time, being a
very great improvement on stoves.” As early as 1846, under the heading Lumber Yard, he offered for sale “a large quantity of river boards,” both yellow and white pine, as well as shingles, laths, posts, and rails.

Although it could still be found in some Arnold ads, the emphasis on cash only no longer dominated them quite as it did in the early 1820s. It is clear that he was always forced to sell many of his goods on credit and hope that payment would soon follow. When it did not, his usual method was to thank his patrons for their past business and then state bluntly that he was “in want of money” and might have to sue. This was how business often had to be conducted long before the days of regular paychecks and credit cards. Competition among Gettysburg merchants was probably increasing during these years, which may explain why Arnold claimed in 1838 that his prices were “the same as those of York and Hanover” and a year later that he was selling “at prices to suit the times, for cash or produce.”

In December 1851 George Arnold informed the public that in the spring he would be moving his store around the corner, to what he called Sell’s corner. Now owned by the Adams County National Bank, this new location was on lot 111 and had been held for many years by members of Jacob Sell’s family. Although he informed the public as early as January 1855 that he had bought the property, Arnold did not secure a deed for lot 111 until October 2, 1858. This was not then an unusual arrangement. Perhaps more unusual is the fact that the bank did not have this deed recorded until 1921.

At his new location, George Arnold continued his well-established practice of advertising in the Gettysburg newspapers. Occasionally he identified his new place of business as the sand stone front (the contemporary Fahnestock store was the red front), but however it was presented to the public it was clear that the inventory of Arnold’s store was continuing to evolve. No longer was it a place to buy groceries, dry goods, hardware, a complete assortment of bar and sheet iron, lumber, or “almost every other article in this line of business.” From time to time there continued to be a few stoves offered for sale, but increasingly the ads identified Arnold’s as a “merchant tailor shop” or a “clothing emporium.” He now employed one or more experienced tailors who familiarized themselves with the latest styles in clothing and busied themselves preparing ready-made clothing. Anyone who desired to have something custom made could easily obtain it. In March 1858 he announced that Mr. Culp (certainly E. Jesse Culp) was “always on hand, bright

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and accommodated.” He was succeeded in September 1860 by William T. King.

In 1855 Arnold assured the public that “his clothing are all of his own manufacturing, and well made of the very best material, and none of your city made trash, which have been put together in a hurry by crushing the poor seamstresses with a mere pittance for her labor, or done with the loop stitch of a sewing machine, which if one stitch gives way the whole seam is gone. We give fair wages, have our work well done and made of the best materials, and our young ladies come in with the garments with smiling countenances and cheerful hearts.” In January 1860 Arnold announced that he had “disposed of his stock of ladies’ dress and fancy goods generally” and would “now give his whole attention” to mens’ and boys’ clothing.

The 1860s newspapers make abundantly clear that anyone seeking groceries, dry goods, or any of the other commodities which George used to sell could now buy these things from any of the increasing number of local merchants who carried them. George Arnold’s name still appeared among the ads, but less frequently than before. For example, in October 1867 he advertised his “large stock of ready-made clothing, mostly of his own manufacture, consisting of all sizes of coats, pants and vests, shirts, drawers, cravats, hosiery, etc. at prices to suit the times.”

In February 1869 Theodore C. Norris (1837-1890), who for some years had been conducting his business in the first block of Chambersburg street, informed the public that he had “removed his store to the corner of the diamond, long occupied by George Arnold,” where he had in stock “every kind of gentlemen’s wear.”

George Arnold had not yet retired. He now moved his store into one or more rooms in the southeast corner of the diamond, where he continued to offer what as late as January 1877 he described as “ready made clothing of all kinds for men.
and boys; best quality and latest styles; selling cheap.”

In January 1878 Harriet A. Harper, widow of the veteran editor of the Star and Sentinel, reported that her storeroom, “lately occupied by George Arnold as a clothing store” in the southeastern corner of the diamond, was vacant and for rent. George Arnold had retired, after fifty-five years. His last place of business was only a few doors east of his first. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that his long career as a merchant had ended with something of a whimper rather than a bang. But perhaps he wanted it that way.

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The Centinel for July 13, 1825 was “pleased to state” that John Hersh, Jr and George Arnold, both of Gettysburg, were the joint owners of one fourth of a ticket which a week before had won what was described as “the Capitol prize of $50,000 in the Union Canal Lottery, at Philadelphia.” They had taken a chance on one of the longest and most successful lotteries in Pennsylvania history, and each man had won $6,250. John Hersh, Jr. (1801-1850) was not the son of the other John Hersh in Gettysburg; he was the younger of the two residents with that name. Arriving in town in 1822, he opened a drug store and the following year was appointed postmaster. In its account of the winnings, also on July 13, the Compiler stated that one-fourth of the prize had gone to a man in Chambersburg.

This particular lottery can be traced back at least to the act of April 2, 1811, by which the state legislature had consolidated two existing canal companies into the Union Canal Company, whose purpose, in the language of the act, was to open “a communication by water for the transportation . . . of goods, wares and merchandizes” between Philadelphia “and the western and north-western counties of the state.” At a time when both New York and Baltimore were also becoming interested in establishing transportation links, in addition to public roads and turnpikes, with their interior counties, this act asserted that “there can be no object which is more likely to promote the great interests of the citizens at large than the improvement of our internal navigation by the contemplated canal and lock navigation.”

Building and maintaining canals required large sums of money. As private agencies, companies such as the Union Canal Company had to rely on as many

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sources as they could find, including stocks, loans, and occasional government grants. Section 28 of the 1811 act extended to the new company a privilege already granted to its two predecessors: the right to raise funds “by way of lottery.” This method had been used in Pennsylvania and elsewhere for many years.

Work on constructing a canal under the act of 1811, delayed in part at least by the War of 1812, did not begin until 1821. By this time, the goal was no longer reaching into the western counties, but rather joining Philadelphia and Reading. What remained for the owners of the Union Canal Company to achieve was a link west from that city to the Susquehanna River at Middletown. The task challenged the engineers. It required much excavation, constructing one of the first canal tunnels in the country, and installing many locks. The canal went into operation in 1827 and continued in use until 1884. Today its course is marked by a series of historical markers placed by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

In the study of lotteries in Pennsylvania to 1833, which was published in the Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography in 1923 and 1924, Asa Earl Martin wrote that “by far the most important single lottery in number of tickets and in the value of prizes in the history of Pennsylvania was the Union Canal Lottery.” Between 1811 and the end of 1833, the company conducted what he called “about fifty different lottery schemes” and paid out in prizes more than $33,000,000.

When they wanted to buy a Union Canal lottery ticket, neither Arnold nor Hersh had to go very far. Almost all tickets were sold by brokers, who advertised in many newspapers and engaged agents in towns and cities to assist them. An examination of the files of the Sentinel and the Compiler for January 1823 through July 1825 has not yielded any ads for the Union Canal Lottery, but in July 1817 the McClellan and Hersh store, then George Arnold’s employer, was selling Washington Monument Lottery tickets. In April 1825 John Hersh, Jr. was selling at the post office tickets for what he called the “Grand State Lottery, Fourth Class.” After 1825, Union Canal Lottery tickets were available at several places in Gettysburg.

Responding to appeals from several quarters, the legislature decreed on March 1, 1833 that after December 31 of that year “all and every lottery and lotteries, and device and devices in the nature of lotteries, shall be utterly and entirely abolished, and are hereby declared to be henceforth unauthorized and unlawful.” Citing “the evils arising from lotteries and the sale of lottery tickets,” the legislators concluded that the right granted to the Union Canal Company had “been fully exercised and exhausted.” However, since that company already needed to make “extensive repairs
and improvements” and lacked “the pecuniary means” to make them, they authorized a long-term loan of $200,000 to the company.

Neither young Hersh nor Arnold was asked to return his prize money.

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As early as 1825, Thaddeus Stevens and several associates, not including George Arnold, began developing iron works in the Fairfield area. The intended market for what they hoped to produce included stoves and what was known as hollowware. They purchased some 1,200 acres of land as the source of raw materials (iron ore and timber) and built Maria Furnace, which soon began producing pig iron.

In 1830, the newly formed partnership of Stevens and George Arnold built Mifflin Forge, located along the Gettysburg-Chambersburg Turnpike about sixteen miles from the furnace. The immediate purpose of the forge was to convert the furnace’s pig iron into wrought iron, but, as Bradley R. Hoch has explained in his biography of Stevens, it was already evident that the quality of Maria Furnace iron was poor, because of the ore from which it was being made. In choosing the site for Mifflin Forge, Stevens may well have intended to find a better nearby source of both iron ore and timber. At an 1831 sheriff sale, he and Arnold purchased 3,000 acres of land in Menallen Township. In May 1831, when Arnold advertised the sale of his large mill property in Germany Township and several houses in Gettysburg, he stated that terms of the sale would be “made known by the subscriber living at Mifflin forge, upon the Chambersburg turnpike, in Franklin County.”

By March 1833, Arnold had returned to the store business on the diamond in Gettysburg. David McConaughy believed that, after Mifflin Forge was burned on the night of November 11, 1833, Stevens and Arnold replaced it and also built a furnace at Caledonia. He implied that the Stevens-Arnold partnership lasted until about 1837. Both the Sentinel and the Star, in reporting the fire, described the forge as the property of Thaddeus Stevens and James D. Paxton. No mention was made of George Arnold.

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On August 28, 1838, George Arnold announced that he had established the Gettysburg Steam Foundry, the first enterprise of its kind in the borough, and that he was prepared to make “castings, of every kind, in the neatest and best manner.” He had already employed a “first rate machinist and pattern maker.” In 1839 he obtained a deed for the two town lots (39 and 40) on which the foundry was built. He was soon offering stoves made in the foundry for sale in his store. By 1841 he had associated Thomas Warren (1801-1866) with him in the foundry. They were now making and selling two-horse and four-horse threshing machines, which they described as “the most useful, labor-saving, and convenient machines of the kind ever offered to the public.”
Arnold remained owner of the foundry until the spring of 1847, when he sold it to Warren. Under several successive owners, the foundry remained in operation until about 1910.

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Operating under a recently passed general banking law, a state charter, and with several hundred stockholders, the Bank of Gettysburg began operating in May 1814. For more than forty years, it was the only bank in the county. George Arnold never became a director.

At least by the mid-1850s some persons were thinking about the desirability of having a second financial institution in the county. It should be one which would receive regular, and probably small, deposits from patrons and then invest the amounts received in real estate and other assets believed to have limited risks. Many if not most of the patrons were expected to be farmers, craftsmen, mechanics, and laborers. Advocates of a new institution learned that there were similar ones operating successfully in several neighboring counties.

By the time the Sentinel began reporting on the plans (March 20, 1857), the supporters had decided to seek incorporation, and they had decided on a name: The Farmers’ and Mechanics’ Savings Institution of Adams County. They had chosen the persons to act as incorporators and proposed an initial issue of 600 shares of stock at $50 each. A week later they informed the public that the charter they were seeking “not only withholds the power of issuing notes, but also banking and discounting privileges.”

When a well advertised public meeting was held on May 4, it was known that the state senate had soundly defeated the incorporation bill, by a vote of 2 to 22. Undeterred, those present concluded that, after all, incorporation was not required to achieve their purposes. David McConaughy told them that the society in Chambersburg had been operating successfully without a charter since 1835. They then proceeded “to organize a savings institution for Adams County,” adopt a constitution and by-laws, and elect thirteen directors. Later in the day the directors elected George Throne (1810-1901) president and George Arnold secretary and treasurer.

The Farmers’ and Merchants’ Savings Institution of Adams County opened
for business in a room next to George Arnold’s store on April 11, 1857. There were business hours six days a week.

David McConaughy, who was a proponent and one of the first directors of the new venture, wrote in 1879 that Arnold, “almost alone by his own personal exertions, succeeded in establishing” it. By using the phrase “almost alone” he was recognizing that there were others, including himself. Of the first thirteen directors, Arnold and one or two others were residents of Gettysburg. Most of the rest were farmers. George Throne, who lived in Franklin Township and was president of the institution and its successor until 1897, was described in his obituary as “a well-known financier.”

Contrary to a long-held belief, the state did not grant a charter to the savings institution in 1858 or at any other time. A major change in its status came only as a result of federal legislation passed during the Civil War. In February 1863 Congress passed the National Banking Act, which authorized citizens to apply for a charter as a bank. If granted, they could use some of the money they were required to raise to operate the bank and the remainder to buy government bonds, which had to be deposited with the United States Treasury. National banks could then use these bonds
as collateral in issuing paper money in the form of national bank notes, which would have the faith and credit of the United States government behind them. By promoting the sale of government bonds, the 1863 act raised much needed revenue in wartime. By authorizing the issue of paper money with federal backing, it promoted a stable currency.

On December 8, 1863 the *Sentinel* stated that “measures are in train” to convert the savings institution into the First National Bank of Gettysburg. On March 11, 1864 Charter 311 was issued and its officers were authorized to “commence the business of banking.” George Throne continued as president and George Arnold became cashier. The capital stock was increased from $50,000 to $100,000. Within sixty days the bank received its first currency in the form of national bank notes. The Bank of Gettysburg became the Gettysburg National Bank under the terms of Charter 611, dated December 1, 1864.

George Arnold remained as cashier of the First National until September 1873. The *Star and Sentinel* for September 10 attributed his resignation to “some differences between himself and the directors as to the internal management of the institution.” The editor explained that as cashier Arnold “was distinguished for his uniform courtesy, faithful devotion to business, and obliging disposition.” In fact, he wrote, over more than fifty years, “he has sustained a high reputation for integrity and honorable dealing, enjoying the confidence of the community, and approving himself as one of our most energetic and useful citizens.” The news of his departure, the editor noted, “produced some sensation on our streets” and a shortlived “run” on the bank. Fortunately, “public confidence was restored, and matters about the bank assumed a wanted quiet.”

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**THE FARMERS & MECHANICS’ SAVINGS INSTITUTION**

*Of Adams County,*

*Opens Saturday, 11th of April, 1859.*

This Institution receives deposits for which it pays interest as follows:

- For over 10 months 4 per cent. per annum.
- For 3 and not over 10 months, 3 per cent. per annum.
- For transient deposits not less than 30 days 2 per cent per annum; payable on demand without notice.

The weekly depositors share the dividends declared and payable semi-annually.

At the first meeting weekly deposits were subscribed by responsible citizens, for the current year, to an amount exceeding $10,000, which will be paid as required by the business of the association.

For loans apply on Wednesday.

Sums received on deposits as low as a dime. Interest to be allowed whenever the deposits amount to $5.00, and on each additional $5.00 and upwards.

Office in South West Corner of Public Square, next to George Arnold’s store. Open daily from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M., and every Saturday for receiving deposits, from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M.

*President,*

GEORGE THORNE,

*Treasurer and Secretary,*

GEORGE ARNOLD.

*Directors,*

John Brough, John Horner,
Samuel Durhaw, George Arnold,
A. Heintzelman, Jacob Musselman,
David McGrey, D. McCaughy,
William Culp, John Mckley,
Robert Hornor, John Throne,
April 6.

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**DIVIDEND.**

Farmers & Mechanics’ SAVINGS INSTITUTION

*of Adams County, June 27th, 1859.*

THE President and Directors of this Institution have this day declared a Dividend of THREE PER CENT., payable on and after the 1st day of July next.

GEORGE THORNE, Pres’t.

Geo. Arnold, Secy & Treas’n.

July 4.

Farmers’ & Mechanics’ Savings Institution of Adams County, Gettysburg, Pa.

Wealth comes by saving.

DEPOSIT your surplus Funds in this Institution, and receive interest at the rate of from two to five per cent. This institution offers a safe, convenient and profitable depository to all classes of people.

July 4, 1859.
In its September 10 issue, the Compiler explained Arnold’s departure somewhat differently. The editor wrote that, “carrying a large amount of real estate for some time,” Arnold “became indebted to the bank in about $33,000, and after securing the institution to the full amount of indebtedness resigned.” At the same time, the directors replaced David McConaughy as the bank’s attorney. The editor concluded his story by echoing the Star and Sentinel. George Arnold, he wrote, “is one of our oldest citizens” and “has always enjoyed universal respect and confidence.”

On October 1, 1873, for $8,000, George Arnold and wife sold lot 111 to President George Throne in trust for the First National Bank of Gettysburg. This deed was not recorded until 1921.

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George Arnold’s involvement in real estate began in the early 1820s and continued for more than fifty years.

In the late spring of 1823 John Arnold, who for more than thirty years had owned a farm and mill in Germany Township, died at his residence southwest of Littlestown and near the Maryland line. Apparently he was not married, but he had as his heirs nine or more nephews and nieces, one of whom was George Arnold. The family believed there was a will, but when none could be found, Peter Arnold, who lived in Maryland, and George Arnold appeared before the Adams County Register of Wills on June 23, 1823 and were awarded letters of administration on the estate. Their bondsmen were Thaddeus Stevens and James A. Thompson, both of Gettysburg. The administrators promised that if a will could be found and proved to be genuine, they would return the letters. The inventory of personal property taken a few days later included the expected numerous notes and other debts due the estate. It amounted to $4,829.

No will was ever found and proved to be genuine. In 1825 Peter Arnold was granted his request to be released from his duties as administrator. This left the task entirely to George Arnold, who presented his account in 1827. This estate had been settled during depressed times. Many of the amounts owed could not be collected. Several expensive suits were required to collect others. Instead of a balance, the account showed a deficit of $3,300. At this point James A. Thompson, one of the bondsmen, was named administrator, primarily to dispose of the real estate. In May 1827 it was sold to George Arnold for $2,350.

In his 1879 obituary, David McConaughy, who was born less than a month after letters were granted for the Arnold estate, wrote that the mill property came to George Arnold “by inheritance from an uncle.” Clearly, it did not. He also wrote that the estate was “burdened with heavy litigation,” which involved Thaddeus Stevens’s fee of more than $1,000. This may be substantially correct, but it may also be an exaggeration.

Whatever may have happened during the four years George Arnold was settling his uncle’s estate, he found himself after May 1827 the owner of a well established and substantial mill property, a dozen or more miles from Gettysburg. When he advertised

https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/ach/vol12/iss1/1 18
it for sale in May 1831 he described it in detail: 320 acres of patented land, with two stone houses, three mills (grist, clover, and saw), and “a complete set of wool-carding engines.” The mills, he claimed, were “in complete order, having recently undergone a thorough repair.” He described the milldam as “rather a curiosity, being one of the best pieces of workmanship of the kind in any private property in the State, being all built of hewn stone, very neatly put together, and most of them very large.” Almost half a century later, the dam and its adjoining race so impressed David McConaughy that in his obituary he called the dam breast perhaps the finest in the county, “which for so many years has stood without need of renewal.”

George Arnold sold the mill property in March 1832, but bought it back at a sheriff sale in October 1835. He remained its owner for the next thirty years. As early as 1840 he began calling the property Locust Grove. In September 1855, when he announced an intention “to retire from the milling and farming business,” he advertised it for sale as four separate adjoining tracts or parcels, totaling 260 acres. He proudly stated how many bushels of lime he had put on the land (in one case, 10,000 or more) and how many fine orchards there were. “The dam and race” on the first parcel “are not equalled.” At this time, in the early 1850s, he was assessed for a grist mill, saw mill, and three tenant houses on Locust Grove.

In April 1852, Arnold announced that he had obtained the patent rights to a milling process, which could produce a barrel of flour from 240 pounds of wheat. He had secured the right to license millers in sixteen Pennsylvania and Maryland counties to use it. Whether anyone took advantage of the offer has not been determined.

Many ads, some only a few lines in length, demonstrated clearly enough George Arnold’s desire to sell all or part of Locust Grove. Finding buyers took some time. The assessed acreage dropped from 200 to 158 in 1847, 118 in 1857, and 15 in 1859. Finally, the remaining 15 acres, with a grist mill, were sold about 1865.

When he sought to sell the mill property in 1831, Arnold also offered his half interest in three
large three-story brick houses on Baltimore Street in Gettysburg. During most of his years as a taxable in the borough, in addition to the business property he held, he was assessed for one or more lots. Probably he had deeds for these lots, but few were ever recorded. He also bought and sold real estate in other parts of the county. Bradley R. Hoch has found that Thaddeus Stevens often bought real estate together with close friends, one of whom was George Arnold.

During the 1860s Arnold became interested in exchanging county and western lands. An 1861 ad announced that he would exchange “on fair terms, a choice farm in Iowa or Missouri, for real estate in Adams County.” Two years later, he said he wanted “a good farm, in Adams County, for which I will exchange one or more farms of choice land in Iowa and pay the difference.” In 1865, in three short ads, he offered “two choice farms in the immediate neighborhood of Gettysburg”; a valuable mill property, on Marsh Creek, with 46 acres of choice granite meadow bottom, five miles west of Gettysburg”; and “a farm in Adams County, for which I will exchange choice western lands, at a fair price.”

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George Arnold was first elected to public office seventeen years after he opened his first store and several years after it appeared that he had found a store location that suited him. He was elected to three one-year terms on the Gettysburg Borough Council and served from 1839 to 1842. This was followed by three one-year terms as burgess of the borough, from 1842 to 1845. He was again elected burgess in 1848 and served for one year. After an unsuccessful attempt to become county treasurer, he was elected to that office in 1853 and served one two-year term, in 1854 and 1855. Arnold was a Whig and must have been aware after he left office that the majority of Adams County voters were transferring their allegiance to the Democrats. With but two exceptions for about fifty years thereafter, every Adams County Treasurer was a Democrat. In 1856 Arnold was elected to a five-year term as justice of the peace for Gettysburg borough. He was not reelected, but for the rest of his life he was often referred to as George Arnold, Esquire.

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Henry J. Stahle, editor of the Democratic newspaper, the Compiler, and David McConaughy, ardent Whig and later Republican, agreed on few things, but they were united in 1879 in praise of George Arnold’s years of public service to Gettysburg and Adams County. From the time he entered business in the 1820s, Stahle wrote in his obituary, “his name became identified with every public enterprise.”

McConaughy credited Arnold with a role, supporting rather than primary in most instances, in organizing the Gettysburg Water Company in 1822 and reorganizing it in the 1840s, in bringing the railroad to town in 1858, in organizing the Gettysburg Gas Company in 1859, and in bringing the telegraph to Gettysburg in 1862 (he was elected president of the company which was charged with managing its affairs for one
year. In 1853 he was vice president of a town meeting called to memorialize the recently deceased Henry Clay. Five years later his name was on the list of some thirty community leaders who endorsed the wall map of Adams County they were shown before it was offered for sale.

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David McConaughy identified Arnold as being “long a consistent member of the Presbyterian Church” and at one time an elder and a trustee. Available records of the Gettysburg Presbyterian Church demonstrate the active role he played in the movement of the congregation in the early 1840s from North Washington Street to its present location on Baltimore Street.

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In 1879 David McConaughy wrote that George Arnold’s “patriotic ardor was developed in his early youth.” He probably had learned from Arnold himself that during the shelling of Fort McHenry in September 1814, when he was fifteen and too young to enlist in any unit, “he went voluntarily and was at the battle of Baltimore.” Nearly half a century later, according to McConaughy, “the passion of his youth was the passion of his mature years, and burned as intensely when his head was white as snow.”

In April 1861, only a week or two after the surrender of Fort Sumter, Arnold was chosen a member of the relief committee to support the families of volunteers who were already leaving from all over the county. He was also chosen for a committee of safety charged with organizing a home guard to protect the county from what was believed to be a genuine threat of raids from Maryland. David McConaughy wrote that, after the failure of the Peninsular campaign, Arnold traveled to Virginia in the late summer of 1862 to do what he could to relieve the sufferings of the many sick and wounded soldiers.

On June 20, 1863 Arnold was chosen chairman of a local committee intent on “placing the county in as thorough a state of military organization as possible.” All able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and sixty were urged to volunteer for service for six months or the duration of the emergency. Those unwilling to volunteer under those terms were urged to enroll as “minute men” and prepare to “assist in repelling or retarding the progress of the enemy” in any way possible. Eleven days were not nearly enough time to perfect these ambitious plans.

During the battle itself, along with many other townspeople, George Arnold remained in his home. According to McConaughy, he was able to save his store inventory by hiding it in a section of the cellar “which he had wisely walled up for the purpose.”

There was something which his father-in-law did immediately after the battle ended that David McConaughy believed “may not be known to all.” He included it in his obituary, and it is worth quoting in full:

21
On the early morn of July 4, 1863, Mr. Arnold was the first person to communicate to General Meade the fact that the Rebel forces had withdrawn from the town. Soon after dawn, mounting a horse and riding over Cemetery Hill, with his white hair contrasting strangely with the roses upon his cheeks, he came suddenly upon the General-in-chief, where he had bivouacked for the night, south of Katy Guinn’s barn, beyond the woods near John Thompson’s house, and surprised him and his staff with the first Intelligence that Ewell’s Corps had just evacuated Gettysburg. The General in turn warmly thanked this strange messenger of victory.

Forty-three days after the battle ended, George Arnold wrote a letter to William T. King (1829-1887), who had been mustered into service in June as a sergeant in Company B of the Twenty-first Cavalry, most of whose members were Adams countians. A native of Champaign County, Ohio, after the death of his father in 1830 he had come to Adams County with his widowed mother, whose family had been one of the earliest to settle in Straban Township. After serving his apprenticeship to a tailor and then traveling for several years, King returned to Gettysburg. In September 1860 George Arnold hired him as a merchant tailor.

The Arnold-King letter is a valuable eyewitness account of events in Gettysburg in July and early August 1863 as they were experienced by a thoroughly knowledgeable civilian, one by his own account not given to writing long letters. He knew about plans already underway to bury the Union dead “upon one sacred spot set aside for that purpose.” He was ready to share with his young friend the assessment he had already made of the long-term significance to the town of the battle of Gettysburg.
Gettysburg Augt 15th 1863

Mr. W. T. King

Dr Sir

Yours of the 13th Inst is recd and am pleased to hear from you, and learn that you are all, well and doing well we are moving along here much as usual. Our business continues to be very good. Sales brisk & plenty of work in the Shop. Our town is still lively. Many strangers continue to go & come, Mrs. Arnold & Myself have been pretty near worn out. Our house as been full all the time. We are now getting thinned out a little, almost every body has suffered more or less from the invasion, my losses on the farm are said to be about $1000 dollars. I have not yet been out to see it, nor do I want to see it, I do not murmur but think that we all have cause to be thankful that it is no worse, I can forget all except the loss of my Flag. the glorious old Stars and Stripes-but I will have another, I sent your letter to your wife with a note that she could have the desired articles, I believe they are all well, I am sorry that Co B were not sent here for provo duty instead of the one that is here, it seems queer, I hope you may escape the draft & be permitted to return home, if you have not been over our Battle field it is worth seeing, I consider it worth a trip across the atlantic – you no doubt have noticed from the papers that the ground has been purchased, & our noble brave dead are all to be collected and intered upon one sacred spot set aside for that purpose, and each state in all probability will erect a suitable monument for its own honored dead. Our Town has now become immortalised & we wish to make the enterprise as attractive as possible by enclosing and beautifying those grounds moistened with the blood of our heroic brave-and I have no doubt that our Town will be much benefited by it for years to come-I long to see this Hellborn rebellion crushed, then I can lay down and depart in peace-I am a poor hand at writing long letters, and as I have nothing to say that would be very interesting, I will draw to a close with my best wishes not only for your well fare and prosperity here, but for your happiness hereafter.

Yous very Respy

Geo Arnold

My respects to the boys generally.

Arnold expressed his regret that King’s Company B had not been sent to Gettysburg as provost guards. Company B did arrive in town on August 23. King’s enlistment expired in February 1864. Later in the year he became a lieutenant in Company G of the 209th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry.

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In the months after the battle, in spite of a head “white as snow,” George Arnold’s interest and involvement in public affairs continued apace. According to David McConaughy, later in 1863 he assisted actively in the purchase of land for Soldiers’ National Cemetery and in organizing the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association, of which he later became a director. In the fall of 1864 he was one of five local vice presidents of the Lincoln-Johnson Club. In June 1865 he was chairman of a meeting of the lotholders of Evergreen Cemetery when they took control of the graveyard from the stockholders and replaced McConaughy as president with Samuel Simon Schmucker. In August he was one of nine members of a local committee to assist in efforts to merge the Christian and Sanitary Commissions in a way intended to advance the tremendous task of relief and renewal in the South. In September he presided at a local meeting of the Union party (this was the name the Republican party was then using), one of whose candidates for the November election was David McConaughy (he ran for and won a seat in the state senate). In May 1866 Arnold supported a proposal to erect a monument in the public square (no longer the diamond) in Gettysburg as a memorial to all Adams countians who died in service during the war. This effort received immediate support, but never succeeded.

What might be regarded as Arnold’s last public service was an observatory tower erected on Cemetery Hill in 1878. The Star and Sentinel for March 29 of that year reported that “George Arnold, Esq., has the whole movement in charge and it is to his untiring energy that the public will be indebted for this long needed feature of the battlefield.” The tower, which opened in May, was fifty feet high, with one gallery half way up and another at the top. Arnold issued stock to pay for the tower, but there was still a debt owed when he died in 1879.

It is apparent that this “long needed feature of the battlefield,” although for a time frequently used, never quite lived up to expectations. Within a decade of its completion, assisted by many battle survivors, the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association began placing many monuments and memorial tablets on the field. An 1895 act of Congress transferred the association’s assets to the federal government, which created the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Commission. In that year the government began erecting five steel observation towers at different places on the battlefield and made plans to erect an equestrian statue of General Winfield S. Hancock. In April the Star and Sentinel announced that the statue would probably “be placed on East Cemetery Hill, not far from the old Observatory.” In July the same paper reported that the statue would be placed “a short distance from the site of the observatory,” which would be demolished “to remove all obstructions and to give visitors a chance to view the splendid work to the best advantage.” It remained for the August 27 issue of the paper to say the last words: “The old observatory on East Cemetery Hill has been removed to make room for the Elwell statue of General Hancock.” The statue was dedicated on June 2, 1896. The “old observatory” had done its duty for seventeen years.
George Arnold’s family lived on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line, south of Gettysburg. His father Henry died in Maryland. His mother Catherine died in Germany Township in 1829, in her 56th year.

On November 3, 1825 George Arnold married Ann Maria Jenkins. Born July 7, 1807, she was the daughter of Moses Jenkins, whose family was one of the early settlers in the Manor of Maske. Moses died in Franklin Township in 1814, leaving five motherless children, all of them minors. Ann Maria was living in Gettysburg at the time of her marriage.

George and Ann Maria Arnold had three children: Clementine, Catherine, and Caroline. Clementine died at the age of six in 1832. If there were other children who died in infancy, no record of them has been found.

Catherine Arnold (1829-1853) married David McConaughy (1823-1902) in 1848. A native of Gettysburg, he attended the local college, but then transferred to Washington College, which awarded him a bachelor’s degree in 1840. Admitted to the Adams County bar in 1845, two years later he opened an office in what he described in his ads as the “southwest corner of the public square, one door west of George Arnold’s store.” Catherine McConaughy died in 1853, aged 24. She was the mother of one child, George Arnold McConaughy (1848-1862). David McConaughy remarried in 1856. He and his second wife had four children.
Caroline Arnold (1830-1909) married Charles Homer (1824-1893) in 1853. A native of Gettysburg, he was a graduate of Gettysburg College and was granted his M. D. degree by the University of Pennsylvania in 1846. He practiced medicine in Gettysburg from then until his death. He served as a surgeon after the battle of Gettysburg. Charles and Caroline had four children, one of whom was George Arnold Horner (1860-1862).

After a brief illness, George Arnold died of pneumonia on March 12, 1879, in the Chambersburg Street home of his son-in-law and daughter, the Homers. He was buried in Evergreen Cemetery two days later. Arnold left no will. No steps were taken to settle the estate for eight months, until November 3, 1879, when his grandson, David A. Horner, took out letters of administration. There is neither inventory nor account in the estate file. Ann Maria Arnold survived her husband for more than ten years, dying of pneumonia in the Horner home in Gettysburg on November 17, 1889. She was buried in Evergreen Cemetery two days later. She left no will, but five days later Dr. Charles Homer took out letters to administer on her estate. There is neither inventory nor account in the estate file.

No attempt has been made here to determine George Arnold’s actual wealth at any time during his more than half a century as an Adams County businessman. There are no federal income tax records to review and no known business records which have survived to analyze. There are annual county tax lists for Gettysburg and a number of townships to study, but they are at best only an inexact measure of wealth. In the absence of an inventory and an account in the estate of both George and Ann Maria Arnold, there is little to determine about their assets at the time of their deaths.

George Arnold’s 1825 lottery winnings appear not to have relieved him, at least not for long, of any financial worries at the beginning of his career. In an ad in the Sentinel for October 10, 1827 he called upon “those indebted to the subscriber” to pay what they owed him soon, “as he is much in want of money.” He then expressed the hope “that his request will not be passed over with inattention.” In the decade or so before and after 1850, he was sometimes assessed for a carriage and more often for a gold or silver watch, occasionally for both. For a few years he was assessed in Gettysburg for having an “excess of furniture,” whatever that may have meant at the time. Occasionally he was assessed for a money certificate he owned but the amount was never large and the reference soon disappeared.

As already discussed, the tax records for Gettysburg and several townships show that he was often assessed for real estate he owned, but he never accumulated and held a lot of it as, for example, John McConaughy and Thaddeus Stevens did. In 1832, eight years after his death, McConaughy’s administrator reported to the court that the estate still owned, in whole or in part, twenty-one parcels of real estate.

When repeatedly Arnold informed the public that he was “in want of money” and asked to be paid what was owed to him, he was reflecting the experience of many of his contemporaries. In the Sentinel for January 22, 1855 his appeal took an unusual
form. "Having purchased the property I now occupy," he said, "I will want money to pay for it in the spring." He pled for those owing him "either by note or book account of long standing" to pay him on or before March 1. In one important respect, George Arnold differed from many of his contemporaries. He passed with them through prosperity and depression without ever declaring bankruptcy.

Locations of George Arnold's Store

A 1822-1830
B 1833-1835
C 1835-1852
D 1852-1868
E 1869-1877
Bibliographical Note

This biographical sketch of George Arnold is based, with but a few exceptions, upon the use of newspaper files, tax records, deed books, estate papers, acts of the legislature, and general files, all found in the Adams County Historical Society. Most of these sources are identified by name and date in the text.

The lengthy obituary by David McConaughy, published in the Star and Sentinel on April 3, 1879, was especially useful. While part of it is clearly a secondary source, much of it is primary. McConaughy actually experienced much of what he wrote about. When he did not, it is usually possible to find credible sources to corroborate or correct his account.

Arnold’s many associations with Thaddeus Stevens have been discussed in Bradley R. Hoch, Thaddeus Stevens in Gettysburg: The Making of an Abolitionist (Gettysburg: Adams County Historical Society, 2005), especially pp. 41-2, 46-7, 195-6, and 204.

Asa Earl Martin, “Lotteries in Pennsylvania Prior to 1833,” Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 47 (1923): 307-27 and 48 (1924): 66-93 and 159-60, includes a careful study of the Union Canal lottery, which he believed was one of the most famous in American history. The quotations on page 13 are taken from 48:75-6.

This biography began as an effort to annotate George Arnold’s letter to William T. King. It was undertaken by Larry Bolin, Elwood W. Christ, Randy Miller, Timothy H. Smith, and myself. We soon concluded that proper annotation required more than a few paragraphs about George Arnold. The actual text of the biography is mine, but in a real sense this has been a joint effort by the five of us.
MARCH INTO OBLIVION
By Larry C. Bolin

Preface

The year 2005 saw a vast reorganization of files at the Adams County Historical Society, which brought to light numerous documents and compilations which may not have been seen for years, or even for decades. Among them was a small (3½” by 6¼”) booklet with a soft marbled cover in gray, white, black, and red, which consists of only ten pages (twenty sides), each separated from the next by a blotting page. A decision to transcribe its contents, thus making available a usable copy yet permitting the booklet itself to be protected from possibly damaging handling, brought it into the open.

A brief glance at the text in that pocket-sized pad prompted the thought that it might have historical value. The folder in which it was held led to the same thought—it was labeled, in a previous filing system, “190: Militia March Into Western Pennsylvania, 1794.” Some serious investigation and, as well, more than merely a transcription of its substance seemed warranted. How long had that record lain hidden, by now almost, if not completely, unknown, its potential value underappreciated?

The minutes of the March 6, 1951, meeting of the Adams County Historical Society include, in a statement of recent acquisitions:

5. Mr. George Baker gave a package of old papers received from Paul Chronister of Hampton, who had asked that a member of our Society come to get the papers. Mr[.] Baker had listed the collection of papers, which included old recipes and medical remedies—and an old diary dated 1774 [sic], written by some one who might have been with the army that helped to quell the Whiskey Rebellion—
   There was also a photograph of the Democratic Club of Hampton in 1888.

In accessioning the gift in 1952, Dr. Robert Fortenbaugh described “a diary, author unknown, Oct. 11, 1794, to Nov. 30, 1794.” His added note at the time, “Was it to the Whiskey Rebellion?” shows his probable recognition of, and concern about, not only its possible value to local residents, but also its worth to people with a much broader interest. Apparently no one since has tried to learn more about the contents of that booklet or their author. Even Dr. Fortenbaugh himself made no mention of a second journal it contains. That additional diary, of another trip west, might aid in understanding the first and might even hint at the identity of the diarist.

Other brief writings, including names, extraneous to either journal also appear in the pocket tablet; they might help to date it correctly. Without doubt, though, the first diary directly relates to the Whiskey Rebellion. Both diaries, even if not the original record but rather rewritten into the booklet, were at least copied from original sources and show two treks to western Pennsylvania as recorded by the person who made them.
A portion of the original diary in the collection of the Adams County Historical Society.
The Whiskey Rebellion often is assigned, even by historians, to an obscurity which belies its significance. Its importance was major not only to the people most affected by its cause and those most intimately involved in the playing out of the events, but also to the young federal government, which had to demonstrate its authority yet not trample its own citizens. The situation held a very real potential for tearing apart the fragile nation. President George Washington felt strongly enough about it to involve himself personally in the beginnings of the military action. In the last few years of the century, rapid improvement in economics, safety, and foreign relations, surely spurred in part by the government’s reactions to the insurrection, underscored the importance to the nation as a whole.

People west of the Appalachians generally lived in relatively low circumstances, with a near inability to sustain, much less improve, their everyday lives. Theirs was a perilous situation: a scarcity of money and markets, the ever-present fear of Indian raids, the feeling that their own government essentially had abandoned them. When magnified by a hated excise the declining situation threatened their very existence and they rose almost as one in protest.

The government, functioning in and necessarily responsive to a larger theater, had to consider more than resentment of, vocal opposition to, and sometimes extreme refusal to obey the law. It had to try to prevent an escalation of violent behavior on a scale that could grow into organized armed conflict, a civil war. And it had to prevent any prevalent perception in the rest of the country and among the European powers that the government was weak and unwilling, or unable, to protect its own laws, people, and interests. Not responding to widespread violent resistance to the law could threaten the existence of the still young nation.

It is not the intention here to tell the story of the Whiskey Rebellion. A selected bibliography at the end of this work, however, will give interested readers several options. Included are well-documented books which cover the time, people, and events in great detail and which tell the story from various viewpoints, or from one; summarizations of the main events; portions of books that place the insurrection within other contexts; excerpts from writings in which the uprising is only incidental.

Nevertheless, it is considered prudent to place whatever pertinent message the booklet holds into a broader context. Therefore, the general summary which follows attempts to do just that without delving in great detail into eighteenth-century history.
The Setting

The isolation of Pennsylvanians living west of the mountains after independence was more than just geographical. It carried with it a feeling of being thought of by easterners as second-class citizens. Its effect on westerners was severe. Capable of producing large crops of grain but limited by economic realities and policies beyond their control and, so it seemed to them, their political influence, most of the region’s overwhelmingly agricultural residents were small landholders and landless tenants. They harbored a deep resentment at the ease with which absentee speculators could claim huge tracts of land the local people thought should rightly be theirs. Throughout the west, commerce was small-scale and industry was practically non-existent. Viable markets were few and small and there was very little currency. The balance was so precarious that even a seemingly small setback could be devastating.

The yield of the land could not easily be shipped down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers since Spain controlled New Orleans and the lower Mississippi, which allowed Spanish authorities effectively to block at will a sea path to markets. Attempting to reach established markets to the east meant sooner or later crossing the Appalachians and, in addition, risked encountering not only the English who remained west of the mountains but also the Indians who moved freely about the Northwest Territories and often parts of Pennsylvania. As it was, seemingly continual Indian raids, or the constant threat of them, were an ever-present menace. Government troops’ incursions to stop or prevent such raids seldom relieved the strain since usually they were ineffectual and sometimes were disastrous. The combination of a scattered rural population, insecurity, and economic methods did not permit markets of appreciable value to develop west of the mountains.

But the only apparent option was to the east, across the Appalachians. Nevertheless, the difficulty of that journey made it impractical to many—the expanse and steepness of the mountains coupled with often barely passable roads made them a formidable barrier at any time of the year. Westerners had long concentrated on converting their excess grain to whiskey, which could be transported over the mountains with hope of, even with expectation of, some monetary gain. But all markets considered reachable remained risks because of the difficulty, distance, and time involved in getting to them, so much of the west’s production of whiskey was consumed in the west. More of their whiskey became the medium of exchange, the currency, in a developing barter system throughout the region.

Western Pennsylvania was by no means alone in its isolation. For decades already, settlers west of the total length of the Appalachians had felt a similar separateness. Attempts by farmers to gain some autonomy, some free choice of economic options, some reasonable chance to improve their lot were thwarted at every turn. But only in Pennsylvania did the unrest boil over to an extent deemed by the federal government as requiring forceful intervention.

The Revolution had been costly and individual states, including Pennsylvania, found themselves hard-pressed to find effective means to raise enough capital to pay

https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/ach/vol12/iss1/1
their creditors and to make up for the money still owed to the veterans of the struggle for independence. Pennsylvania had imposed an excise on whiskey which, however, was universally opposed in the west and practically ignored, since the state had neither the means nor the will to make a concerted effort to collect the tax. Then in 1791, the United States Congress passed an excise on whiskey. In the west, from Pennsylvania to Georgia, vocal opposition was immediate and strong.

In the westernmost counties of Pennsylvania, meetings of those protesting the tax and seeking its repeal began to attract large numbers of people. So-called democratic societies sprang up, aiming to coordinate and direct resistance to the excise. The area’s civic and political leaders were drawn to attend; some even led meetings. Most of the foremost people advised moderation, suggesting remonstrances, petitions, and appeals that clearly stated their situation. But, radical people also attended meetings, advocating demands and, if need be, forceful resistance. And there was no shortage of people, many of them perhaps misunderstanding the implications of their actions and thus easily led, willing to follow the more severe course. Liberty poles went up, carrying banners demanding liberty and repeal of the excise. Many threats were voiced and some violence occurred, the latter scattered and mostly unorganized, although in total significant. The resistance became personified as “Tom the Tinker.” Then, gradually, outward signs of unrest and protest faded as cooler heads prevailed.

The law then in force required that cases involving excise infractions be heard in federal courts; in Pennsylvania’s case, that often meant in Philadelphia. In the spring of 1794, writs under that law were issued against a number of western Pennsylvanians. By the time the writs were served, however, a new law, which permitted state courts to try cases more than fifty miles away from a federal court, was in place. Nevertheless, those persons served writs were commanded to appear in Philadelphia. Dissent boiled to the surface again, growing harsher than before and extending farther, throughout the western counties. Violence erupted again, in some instances organized and armed. Private property was destroyed and some deaths ensued. Incidents showing support of the resistors began to occur outside the region, including at several points in Pennsylvania east of the mountains and in neighboring states. What previously might have fallen under the term strong opposition or civil disobedience was becoming intolerable armed rebellion, insurrection. Any government worthy of the name would, must, in such a case take action to forestall further insubordination.

President George Washington demanded that the whiskey rebels desist or face certain punishment. Representatives of both the state and federal governments held meetings with western agents in an attempt to iron out differences. Even though again tempers had cooled and violence had ceased, the federal commissioners, after their meetings with western Pennsylvania leaders, reported that the excise could not be enforced by local civic authorities and that they could not be sure that violence would not break out once more. The President felt he had to order a show of overwhelming force to convince the insurrectionists, the country, and the world that no one could break the law with no punishment, that the government could receive the support of its citizens when federal law was challenged, and that the government could and would meet its obligations in a manner and to the extent which was required.
On August 7, 1794, in preparation for a possible need to move on short notice, the President ordered the raising of militia in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia, the total to be 12,950. Pennsylvania’s quota was 5200, to be composed of 4500 infantry, 500 cavalry, and 200 artillery. On September 9, he ordered the individual state militias to mobilize. On September 24, he received the commissioners’ report and ordered the march.2

Governor Henry Lee of Virginia was named commander-in-chief and Governor Thomas Mifflin of Pennsylvania was appointed to lead his state’s troops.3 York County’s numbers were to be “twenty-two cavalry and 550 infantry, rank and file.” The York County contingent belonged to the Third Brigade, Fourth Division, Pennsylvania Militia, composed of troops from York, Cumberland, Lancaster, and Franklin Counties and led by Brigadier-General James Chambers.4 The combined Pennsylvania and New Jersey troops were to rendezvous at Carlisle, where the President himself arrived on October 4.5 When all preliminary planning and movements were accomplished, those combined troops, who made up the right wing of the army, would march west from Carlisle by “the State and the Glade roads.” Meanwhile, the left wing, the Maryland and Virginia militiamen, would march west from Cumberland, Maryland, on the “Braddock Road.” The two wings would join west of the mountains near the center of the insurgency.6

By October 10, the situation at Carlisle was well enough in hand and enough soldiers were encamped there that the President ordered the first of the militia to be dispatched toward Bedford, where a second rendezvous would take place. On the 11th, most of the troops still at Carlisle headed west. The next day, after leaving instructions for the organization of and the orders to be given to any detachments which had not yet reached Carlisle, George Washington himself left the town, heading for Shippensburg and Chambersburg, and ultimately Cumberland and Bedford.7

Washington recorded in his diary on October 13 that he had left Carlisle by “the left road” to avoid the marching army.8 His daily record of travel and activities and observations continued until he reached Bedford on the 19th. The next day he met with staff and determined that the militia could begin the push into rebel-supported territory by the 23rd, then ordered that the procedures for achieving that timetable be set in motion. With that, he ended his direct involvement in the march and prepared to leave for Philadelphia, in order to be there before the second session of Congress opened in the first week of November.9

The march from Carlisle to near Pittsburgh would prove to be anticlimactic. Perhaps recognizing at last that they might have to answer for their flouting of the law, many of the insurgency’s ringleaders had fled the area; others had simply faded into more remote parts of Pennsylvania. Although a considerable number of persons were apprehended and several were tried, only a very few were imprisoned, and those only briefly. The rebellion had lost its impetus and the rebels were in retreat even as the army prepared to march. Nevertheless, unhindered by rebels, the march proceeded, a show of determination and power which solidified the government’s hold on its citizenry and the nation’s standing in the international community.
Illustration of a Liberty Pole drawn by Larry C. Bolin.
The Booklet

Several soldiers’ personal journals concerning the militia trek to quell the western Pennsylvania insurrection have survived the passing years. At least one was kept by a York (now Adams) County resident. It could add to what other militiamen’s accounts might tell about the expedition that escaped official reports and records. What follows below is a verbatim transcription of that 1794 diary, using also the diarist’s punctuation, succeeded by an analysis of its entries. At that point, the Whiskey Rebellion becomes secondary to the little book’s further message, although the connection remains. A literal copy of another diary, kept during a similar, although solitary, journey in 1800 by the same person, and likewise an analysis of it, then follow. The transcription of the booklet ends with the several other entries scattered among its pages, which on the surface appear to be unrelated to the diaries, along with an analysis of those entries’ possible ties to the trips west and to the diarist.

The March, 1794

The diary begins on the inside of the front cover.

Marchd from Carlisle Octobh On saterday 11th 1794
Page 1: Marchd from Mountrock Sunday 12th Marcd from Shipinsburg Monday 13 Lay tuesday 14th Marchd from Strawsburg Wedsenday 15th Marchd from Littleton 16th Marchd from the top of Sidelinghill 17th Marchd from the Crossens 18th Lay in Bedford sunday 19th And Monday 20th And tuesday 21st And Wedensday 22d Marchd thursday 23rd to the East end of the dry ridge Marchd Friday 24th to huses encampment, and there it began to rain Saterday 25 Marchd to Barlin in the glades, Sunday 26th Lay in the house of Jacob Kable, Monday 27th Marcd
Page 2: tuesday 28th to Jone’s Mill at the East side of Lauralhill Wedenday 29th Marcd to hovers thursday 30 Lay I went to hunt kild a turky, Friday 31st Marcd to Cheryes mill in Legonar Valy about nine Oclock at night On a turn-out of Volunters waded Jacobs Creek and Brought Ralph Cherry Into camp, November 1st Lay Sunday 2d Lay in Camp, Monday 3rd Lay in Camp, Tuesday 4 Marcd Within five miles of Buddsferry on Yough river, Wedensday 5th Marchd to Karnahans on Swekley Thursday 6th Lay in Camp on the 5th I went Out And Lodg’d at Simeon MceGrews
Thursday the 6th spent with my friends and Lodg’d with James M’cGrew, Friday 7th Camp Lay and I Returnd, Saturday 8th Lay, Sunday 9th Lay in Camp Monday 10th March’d to James Cavets, Tuesday 11th March’d to Helmans, Wednesday 12th March’d to Mackaneers, Thursday 13th March’d Within 4 Miles of Pitt, Friday 14th Lay in Camp It snowd, Saturday 15th Camp Lay I went to hunt and mistfire at a deer it snowd Sunday 16th Camp Lay & it snowd very fast Monday 17th Camp Lay Tuesday 18th Wednesday 19 Lay in Camp I went to John Cavets Thursday 20 I kild a a turkey & And the troops retreated on their way Friday 21st with my frinds and Saturday 22d and Sunday 23rd and Monday 24th Tuesday 25th Bought a bay mare Saddle and bridle for thirty one pounds.

Page 4: Ten shillings, Wednesday 26th set Out for York County rode to foot of Lawral hill on the West side, Thursday 27th rode to the East end of the dry Ridge seven miles from Bedford, Friday 28th Came six miles to my Friend David Potts and rested Saturday 29th Set out and came to my dwelling a Sunday evening 30th 1794

Analysis

Even though at times differences are present, there is a congruence of the diarist’s account of the expedition’s route and timing to official reports that suggests the journal is authentic. Discrepancies might creep into official records and histories as readily as into the personal records of individuals who supposedly are untrained in the need for accuracy.11

The first several days’ marches are simple to follow: Carlisle to Mountrock to Shippensburg, 21 miles, with Mountrock about a third of the way.12 The army then entered Franklin County and camped at “Strawbsur,” which evidently is now Upper Strasburg, an 11-mile march from Shippensburg. The troops remained encamped there the following day, October 14.13 The next site, Littleton (Ft. Lyttleton), 17 miles distant in present Fulton County, was reached on the 15th.14 Then came, on the two following days, “the top of Sidelinghill” and “the Crossens,” those legs of the march about 12 and 20 miles.15 The next day, the 18th, the unit the diarist was with arrived at Bedford, after a 14-mile trek.16

Bedford was the staging point for the push over a series of extremely difficult ridges. There was some concern about what reaction the passage of the militia might generate beyond Bedford. That combination perhaps dictated a closer concentration of forces and supplies on the open road, and again the troops paused, permitting the trailers
to come to them and President Washington to arrive from Cumberland—Washington got
there the following day. West of Bedford was the territory of the insurrectionists. There
had been relatively little active opposition this far east, but from here on the militia
should have expected to encounter people who almost without exception insistentely
wanted the excise on whiskey removed. At Bedford, too, expeditions to apprehend
known or suspected insurgents began, a prelude of what was to occur frequently after
the Appalachians were behind them, that being part of the militia’s assigned service.17

On October 23, westward movement en masse commenced; that day’s march,
almost certainly less than 10 miles, reached the “dry ridge.” It was the first of many
campsites the diarist identified with vague, now often hard to place names.18 The
next day’s trek was to “huses encampment,” which with little doubt is where a stream
then called Hughes Camp Run crossed the Glade Road. It was an 11-mile day.19 The
diarist’s notation that at “huses” it began to rain is not merely an observation on the
weather; he was commenting on the difficulties the rain brought with it. The effects
are clearly shown in corroborative reports of rain at the time.20 The next day, October
25, ostensibly despite continuing rainfall, the militia reached Berlin, having entered
present Somerset County shortly after beginning the day’s march and advancing on the
day 12 miles.21

It appears that at Berlin the militia remained encamped an extra day, for on
the 26th the journal keeper noted “lay in the house of Jacob Kable.”22 He must have
meant that he himself spent the day (and night?) at a tavern or a private residence. That
marks him as an officer.23 That October 26 entry suggests that the diarist had spent the
previous night in the militia camp at Berlin, since he did not mention Kable on the 25th.
That, however, does not negate the possibility that Jacob Kable lived in or very near
Berlin. The two following journal entries do little to clarify the situation, offering only
enough information to permit alternative readings. They are: “27th Marcd” and “28th to
Jone’s Mill at the East side of Lauralhill.” Does the former, with no destination given,
suggest that the diarist simply returned from Kable’s to the camp at Berlin? And does
the latter then tell that on the day after, the militia broke camp at Berlin and traveled as
far as Jones’s Mill, 15 miles to the northwest? Or, did the diarist combine two separate
marches into a seemingly unique two-day entry? That suggests two very short marches,
likely of seven and eight miles, with Somerset as the intermediate campsite.24 Such
slow progress might be attributed to still-falling rain, difficult terrain, or an ongoing
search for insurgents.

On October 29, the militia arrived at “hovers,” perhaps eight miles on the day
by this reading, followed by another layover, during which the diarist went hunting.25
Apparently, he was hunting for his own benefit only, unless he was not a very dedicated
hunter or a good marksman, or unless pickings were slim—one turkey would not have
provided meat for many. Nonetheless, a hunting excursion, arguably alone, again gives
the appearance of a privileged person on the march.

The militia marched to Cherry’s Mill on October 31, perhaps another eight-
mile extension. The diarist wrote: “On a turn-out of Volunters waded Jacobs Creek and
Brought Ralph Cherry Into camp.”26 Suggested is that the writer was one of those who
volunteered for the mission and that Cherry was one of the insurrectionists.27
There exists a possibility in that telling that the diarist miswrote what happened during those last few days of October, for different accounts suddenly begin to diverge widely from this one. More likely, though, the understanding of his words as interpreted above is faulty. A re-reading is called for. The advance troops reached Hover’s by October 29, remained in camp on the 30th, then marched to Cherry’s Mill the next night. What do other sources say?

One account tells very little of the site-by-site marching. It skips any narrative of the daily activity during the end of October, picking it up again only on November 2, when Commander Henry Lee ordered the right wing, under Governor Thomas Mifflin, to resume its march on the 4th, move toward Budd’s Ferry via Lodge’s, find a convenient campsite and there await further orders.28 Another account of the march, even though very brief, describes the route beyond then Bedford County as “along the road skirting the northeastern part of Fayette, to what is now Mount Pleasant, in Westmoreland, at which place the advance brigade arrived and encamped on the 29th.”29 There is the answer which brings the diarist’s journal into agreement with other accounts.

The march on the 29th, to Hover’s in one version, to Mt. Pleasant in another, does not mean to two sites—they are the same, clearly identified by the latter name. The intermediate stops described above and in notes 25 and 26 did not occur. The error was in anticipating that each movement was an advancement westward. Instead, the march from Jones’s Mill to Hover’s (Mt. Pleasant) on the 29th was one of perhaps 20 miles and the one on the 31st then in fact was a nighttime backtracking maneuver to Cherry’s, only 3 or 4 miles. Cherry was taken to the camp at Mt. Pleasant.

A clearer discrepancy appears in recorded accounts of the subsequent, more northerly, continuation of the march. According to one description, “the army moved on to the vicinity of the Monongahela and Youghiogheny rivers and went into camp at a point between Parkison’s [sic] and Budd’s Ferries, after which the main body moved toward Pittsburgh.”30 By that version, the army was encamped between the rivers. The diarist disputes that as the position of the troops he was with. On the 4th, he wrote, they marched to within five miles of Budd’s.31 The following day, November 5, they moved on, to “Karnahans on Swekeley.”32 Both sites unquestionably were east of the Youghiogheny. The militia remained in camp at Karnahans four days and five nights, until the 10th.

Once again, the diarist exhibited and recorded the freedom only special standing could permit. On November 5, he went to, and lodged with, Simeon McGrew. The next day he spent with friends, staying that night with James McGrew.33 He returned to camp on the 7th.

The march resumed on November 10 and that day the troops arrived at “James Cavets.” On each of the next three days they moved on, successively to “Helmans,” “Mackaneers,” and “to within 4 miles of Pitt.”34 With the last advance, they reached their farthest campsite. The army remained near Pittsburgh from the 13th until the 20th of the month.

Yet again the diarist did not tarry. Perhaps his hunting excursion on the 15th was encouraged, although once more his proficiency can be questioned since he
returned with no game. Apparently, his lone opportunity resulted in having “mistfire” at a deer. Then on the 19th, he went to “John Cavets.” The next day, he had better luck hunting, bagging a turkey. On that day, too, the militia began their return home. But the diarist did not accompany the army, showing instead, for a final time, his perhaps unique status, which on this occasion allowed him to completely abandon the march.

For four more days he visited with friends. Then on November 25, he bought a horse and riding gear, which enabled him to make a lightning-quick trip home. On the 26th, he began his return. On the first day on horseback, he made it as far as the west side of Laurel Hill. The next day’s leg took him to the same “east end of the dry ridge” he had recorded on the march west, a ride of some 39-44 miles, depending on the route taken—the longer southern way seems more likely, which then also indicates that probably he began that day at, or near, present Jones Mill.

Therefore, on November 27 the diarist, in just two travel days, had come to within seven miles of Bedford. By that date the militia, if on their ordered schedule, had reached The Crossings, 21 miles farther east. The army had been on the road nine days, averaging nearly 14 miles per day and accumulating in all 124 miles. Perhaps the nearness of the troops influenced the writer’s next day, especially if he was not quite sure just how far ahead they were. On the 28th, he rode only six miles, and so was still west of Bedford, then stopped at the place of a friend, David Potts, and, as he wrote, “rested.” Since the militia on that same day, if maintaining their schedule, marched 20 miles, putting them at day’s end 35 miles to the east of the diarist and past the turn-off to Chambersburg, from that time he could feel sure that he would not likely encounter even stragglers if he had any qualms about meeting the troops on the road.

But if the army had actually begun the march home on November 20, as the diarist recorded, then by the time he reached the dry ridge, the troops were at Bedford, only seven miles ahead. His decision to rest might thus be seen with greater clarity. Still, his six miles on the 28th and the army’s 14 would then have left him at day’s end 15 miles behind and still safely able to avoid catching up to the militia if he chose and yet able to travel swiftly and steadily.

The journal ends abruptly. The diarist left his friend’s place on the 29th and made it all the way home on the 30th! He must have ridden nearly, if not more than, 90 miles in the final two days. Essentially, he had returned home, probably at least 160 miles, in four days.

What did the diarist think afterward of the whole exercise? What did he say to family and friends? In some quarters and for some time, even if only briefly, there must have been a feeling of futility concerning the necessity of the expedition since the militia had met absolutely no opposition, so was the diarist, and as well the government, subjected to some derision? How could he show the value of the march?

Perhaps the fact that the country’s experiment in representative democracy was still in its formative stages meant that the diarist did not have to reach for explanations. Perhaps he and others generally were naturally more attuned than many are today to political, economic, and societal situations and could see more clearly...
their cause-and-effect relationships. In a short time people might have begun to view the decision to march as a key component in rapidly improving conditions on many fronts, local, national, and international. The diarist might well have been a highly regarded person locally because he had gone on that march.

His experience certainly must have influenced him in positive ways. Not much more than five years later, he undertook a second march, retracing much of the first, but this time alone and surely not expecting to meet vengeful people.

A Second March, 1800

The diary begins on the inside of the back cover.

Jan'y 21st 1800 Set to the Westward three qrs after two O Clock lodg'd at George Cochs 22d paid six pence pass'd thro Shepings burgh at twelve O clock lodgd in Fennets burgh trav this day 28 Miles Cold black Clouds small snow showers 23d passd Sideling hill a 2 Oclock paid this day five shillings and four pence lodg at bloody run marcht 37 miles 24th Clear and pleasent paid 5/5 marcht to the top of aligany 31 Miles and 1/2—25th stormy cold heavy showers of snow pass Sumerset one o clock paid 6 Shillings Clowdy Excessive Cold lodged

Page 1: at Widow logwoods this day Marcht 251/2 miles—Sundy 26th Clear and pleasent Marcht 24 miles paid this day 5/5d—27 Clowdy Changd boots gave 1/2 a doller paid 2/5 march'd 12 miles Came to Simion McGrews and loded—28th Clear viseted friends Went to James McGrews Senior—to Arch McGrews James Junr to Jn° Boyds Wm Boyds and lodg'd at James Seniors—29th Clear & frosty Came to Simeons and—moved for york County marcht 15 mile to Lovingeres—30th Clear and Excessive Cold paid one shilling and six pence 1/2 march'd 37 miles lodged at Cimbles—

Page 2: 31st snow paid 2/8 marcht 17 Miles at 12 Oclock and 30 minets fresh snow then midlig deep marcht 7 miles lodgd at m° Kynton snow'd on unt. in the night full nee deep in y°
mornig—February 1st high wind snow drifting
wind ceased sunshine Warm Marcht at 12
O Clock pass’d Bed ford 2 O Clock paid 8
pence came 2 Miles on this side the crossings
march’t 24 miles Sunday 2d Clear and
pleasent paid 4 shillings and 8 pence march’t
34 miles lodg’d one mile below strawsburgh—
3rd sharp frost paid 2/2 snow and storm at 2 or
three OClock Exceeding Cold marcht this day
30 miles with M’ Edward Weakley Changed
to rain at night 4th warm foggy paid 3/9

Analysis

The diarist set out to the west at 2:45 on the day before Adams officially
became a county. His starting point is not given, nor is his distance traveled. When he
began his return trip on January 29, however, he wrote that his destination was York
County. Without doubt, he then was going home. Almost surely he did not travel far
the first day, for he had probably only three hours or so of daylight. Maybe, though, he
knew the road well and felt secure in going on in the dark, or maybe he wanted to go as
far as George Coch’s that day for a specific reason. His next day’s journal entry might
hint at the first day’s length.

The diarist apparently got a late start on January 22 after paying just a small
sum, which presumably was for his previous night’s lodging. He wrote that he went
through Shippensburg at noon, then stopped at Fannettsburg, having traveled that
day, by his own reckoning, 28 miles. Also, on the second day he began to note the
weather conditions.

The next leg of the journey was a long one, 37 miles, to Bloody Run, and it
entailed crossing Sideling Hill, which was no easy task. That distance, the first of
several of more than 30 miles in usually rough terrain and in often bad weather, brings
the thought that perhaps the diarist, for most of the trip, was on horseback, even though
he consistently wrote that he was on foot. It is accepted here that he was a hardy
individual and indeed did walk.

The following day brought another long hike, 31½ miles, to the top of the
Allegheny ridge. The 25th was cold and windy, with snow. Despite the weather,
the diarist, passing Somerset in the early afternoon, walked in all that day 25½ miles
before stopping for the night at Widow Logwood’s. Then on January 26 he added
24 miles to the growing total, but he failed to record a lodging place. On the day after,
though, he wrote that he came to Simeon McGrew’s, just 12 miles beyond his previous
stopping point. McGrew was someone he had visited during the 1794 militia march.
The diarist must have been able to spend a good portion of January 27 with Simeon
McGrew.

January 28 was a whirl of visiting “friends,” three named McGrew and two
Boyd. Evidently, they all lived in a tightly concentrated area, somewhat dependent of course on whether meeting with five individuals also meant visiting five homes. That night was spent at the house of an elder James McGrew.53 The noted return of the diarist to Simeon McGrew’s the next day likely holds some significance, but that return was brief at best.54 Obviously, he spent little time there on the 29th, for he had time enough to travel 15 miles toward home before ending the day at “Lovingeres.”55

On January 30, the diarist walked 37 miles, to “Cimbles.”56 On the last day of the month, he encountered snow, nevertheless progressing 17 miles by 12:30, when snow began to fall again. He wrote that the snow was then “midlig” deep. As it is deciphered here, the word represents “middling,” that is, medium, which to the diarist likely meant to just below the calf.57 Despite such unfavorable conditions, he trudged on for an additional seven miles, in ostensibly constant snowfall, before ending that day at Mr. Kynton’s.58 The snow stopped falling during the night, but was “full nee deep” the next morning.

February began very windy with drifting snow, but by midday the wind died and the sun shone. The diarist noted that at noon he set out again, passed Bedford two hours later, and progressed to “2 Miles on this side the crossings” before stopping, having tramped 24 miles.59 He also noted paying 8 pence after he passed Bedford, which probably was for food.

The 2nd was a pleasant day and he walked 34 miles, ending, as he recorded it, “one mile below strawburgh.”560 The next day was cold and by mid-afternoon stormy, with snow. The nasty conditions surely were ameliorated by the presence of a co-traveler for company, so the 30-mile trek that day must have been less wearisome.51 Besides, he was nearing his home.

Apparently, the diarist’s journey ended on February 4, for he recorded only his lodging fee and the weather conditions for that day (or more realistically, for that morning). It is assumed that he arrived home, but felt no obligation to bring his journal to a logical close by recording his travels’ end. It is a somewhat unsatisfactory ending, an unfinished finality. Who, for example, was he? Where was his home? What was his motivation for not just one, but two laborious trips? There are hints within the diaries and further clues in the other, miscellaneous, writings in the booklet, but they are limited. Therefore, conclusions derived must also be limited and, in addition, speculative.

**Extraneous Entries**

Here again the booklet shall be divided into front and back halves in order to allow an understanding of the extra writings’ appearance. Each half consists of ten pages, or sides.

The first four pages of the front half hold nothing but the 1794 diary. Pages 5 and 7-10 are blank. There is, however, a lone entry, in pencil:

Page 6: W R Sadler62

The back half begins with the equivalent of three pages of the entries which
constitute the 1800 diary. The inside of the cover, however, acts as the first page, so the diary appears on only two actual sides. Pages 3-9 are blank. But, one side on which the diary is written also contains two extra entries, the first in pencil, the second in ink:

Page 1, top: Jiossh Kerr 
Page 1, bottom, inverted: Recivd for Ludwick Waltemire 9 Crowns

The last full entry is in pencil, shown here in lines as in the booklet:

Page 10: Oats 60 Bush 29cts
Do 30
Blish x Linch
120 Bush More
or less at 29cts

The back half of the booklet holds one more clearly written item, ostensibly a single upper-case character, its meaning unknown but presumed to have no connection to the other contents:

Page 2 blotter: S (or L)

Analysis

The given name of Kerr used here is a guess. In fact, the name as it is written may include a middle initial or some other character. Calling the individual Josiah might be far from what was written or intended. Kerr’s name appears in a very important position and it is underlined, perhaps a further hint of its fundamental significance.

The division of the booklet into halves as they now are recognized is based on the two diaries and on the historical society’s modern accessioning. The part now seen as the back half, however, possibly was considered originally the front. If so, Josiah Kerr might have made the very first entry, his name, at a prominent place, the top of the first page, and underlined it to emphasize that the pad was his and to separate his name from anticipated subsequent entries. Based on the handwriting, though, Kerr appears not to have entered anything else into the booklet.

The 1800 diary is continued right below Kerr’s name. At the bottom of the page, the diary pauses just above the Waltemire entry.

The placement and inverted position of the Waltemire line perhaps also reveal a special significance, although no reasonable rationale can be offered for its upside-down orientation. Who was entrusted, and when, to receive for Waltemire and deliver to him nearly £2½? His residence, whether in Adams or Cumberland County, might have been near the diarist’s or on his 1800 route, so at least hypothetically the latter may have been the collector/deliverer of the money. Like Kerr, Waltemire appears not to have authored the diaries.

Since both the Kerr and the Waltemire entries are on a page of the 1800 diary, yet neither seems to relate to it directly nor to interfere with it, the probable explanation
is that both were already there when the journal was recorded. And since individuals of proper name and age did live in the area before 1800, their prior entry into the booklet may be coincidental only; after all, unknown also are the age of the booklet and who all of its possessors were. In any event, no tie of Kerr or Waltemire to the diarist is evident.

That is manifestly not the case with Sadler and Blish, since they married sisters named McGrew, the surname that recurs time and again in relationship to the diarist. Even though no familial tie of either Sadler or Blish to Linch has emerged, nevertheless evidently Blish and Linch were connected in some manner, perhaps in a business, instead of a family, relationship.

The Blish entry contains several elements which might be hard to comprehend. In total, it appears to be an itemization of some sort, perhaps pertinent to an inventory, bill, or receipt. It is understood to list 60, 30, and 120 bushels of oats valued at 29 cents per bushel. The “Do” in line 2 is “ditto” abbreviated, that is, a repeat of “Oats” in line 1. The “x” between the names “Blish” and “Linch” is taken to represent an ampersand, thus their perceived connection.

Only if written in his youth might Sadler’s name have appeared in the booklet before the late 1820s. Certainly, Blish’s and Linch’s names might have been entered earlier, but not coupled before about 1818. That then invokes suspicion that both diaries were also written into the booklet long after the incidents and dates they record. Nonetheless, the very accuracy of those journals surely denotes that, even if not the original book of record, the booklet tells in the words of the person who first wrote them down his own experiences in 1794 and 1800.

The capital letter on the back page 2 blotter in reality might not be the only thing written there. Other images, very faint, are perhaps there, seemingly in rather even lines—that is not proposed with any sense of confidence, however. Far surer, though, is that if not imagined the markings do not mirror the words on page 2 and therefore are not simply blots of excessive ink. Perhaps better eyes or modern technology can determine whether anything of substance is there and, if so, exactly what it is.

Final Observations

The diaries exhibit the same handwriting, perhaps not well-schooled, but perhaps consistent with the very inconsistent spellings in common use at the time. Those journals indicate by their handwriting that they were entered into the booklet at, or nearly at, the same time. That is no guarantee, however, that they were written in 1794 and 1800 by the man who experienced the trips. It is perfectly possible that they were copied in one sitting, albeit from original sources, perhaps many years after the events they chronicle. It is possible, too, although unlikely, that the extraneous entries are of the same hand, noticeable differences maybe the result of the passage of more substantial time.

Together, the two journals clearly show an affinity of the author to people
named McGrew or closely related to the McGrew family of Westmoreland County. Moreover, those western McGrews were themselves descendants of the McGrews of what is now Adams County. Additionally, several of the seemingly miscellaneous entries in the booklet record names which, with very little investigation, prove to have McGrew connections, although of a later generation. A total of probably twenty-six people are named in the booklet. In all likelihood, however, some of the names, perhaps at least eleven, identify sites, not individuals, in the context of the diarist’s experience. Therefore, the number of people with possible family ties to the McGrews is at most fifteen. Of those fifteen (even though not all have been investigated), eight: Simeon, two Jameses, and Arch McGrew, John and William Boyd, William Sadler, and Charles Blish, have demonstrably clear ties to the McGrews by birth or marriage. A ninth, Edward Weakley, was the uncle of a girl who married a William McGrew of the Adams County family. Plus, three more McGrews of Westmoreland County: Alexander, William, and Simon (the last actually might be the above Simeon), possibly could be added to the grouping of related McGrews named in the booklet (see note 26). The obvious, frequent, widespread tie to one family leads inescapably to the conclusion that the diarist probably also was a McGrew by name or relationship.

John McGrew, who was the father-in-law of William Sadler and Charles Blish and who died in 1826, was also the son of Archibald and Martha (Bracken) McGrew (see note 53). He therefore is an obvious connector of the two clear McGrew generations in the booklet. His tie to so many McGrews named cannot be denied. Further, his connection spans more years and individuals, and in more places, than anyone else who might appear as possible diarist. Thus, he appears to be a likely nominee as author of the diaries, even to a degree of believability to call him probable author.

Apparently by his own calculations in 1800, the diarist logged 158 miles from somewhere south and east of Shippensburg to the (presumed) residence of Simeon McGrew in North Huntingdon Township, Westmoreland County, the base for his further travels in his brief western stay. To that must be added the unsure distance he walked on the first day of his journey, an estimated 12 miles, making his total from home to Simeon’s some 170 miles. Even though arguably he returned by the same route and even though again he logged his daily distances, he counted 164 miles from McGrew’s to just one mile east of Shippensburg, to which must be added 20 more to fit the guessed distance from Shippensburg to his home. His eastbound trip thus came to 184 miles, exceeding the westward one by 14! The discrepancy is not convincingly explained easily.

A 14-mile difference would mean an average of about two miles per travel day, which might fall within reasonable bounds, considering the iffy capability of closely measuring time and distance in the diarist’s situation. That average, however, would require a consistently overlong estimation almost daily. Possibly the distances traveled on just a few occasions, most likely on the days of 30 or more miles, were overstated by a more significant number. But he logged extreme mileage in both directions and it must be conceded that at times the recorded higher numbers appear to be very accurate. Possible too, and certainly plausible, is that his route and lodging
sites have been misread here. His easterly walk, at least to Bedford, might not have tracked his footsteps west from that place, for example.

There are clearer, but not necessarily surer, checks on the diarist’s distance, and using Shippensburg and Mt. Pleasant as more easily measured, and grasped, terminals might ease comparisons. It requires accepting, nevertheless, that Lovingere’s as well as Hover’s name the same site as Mt. Pleasant. As measured here, the 1794 militia march totaled 139 miles between the selected terminals, while the diarist’s 1800 journal logged 134 on his westward journey, but accumulated 148 on his return. Two computer mapping programs agree almost to the mile to the diarist’s 1800 westerly figure, MapQuest counting 133 miles and Yahoo 131.7! Those latter differences are inconsequential. So, the diarist’s recorded mileage westward is taken to be more accurate.

Only two explanations for the additional 14 miles in the 1800 homeward walk are evident. Either the diarist followed a different path from Simeon McGrew’s to Bedford than the one he had used just a few days before in going the other direction, which seems to be a more likely reason, or he was less careful in calculating or recording his daily mileage on the homebound trek.⁶⁷

The 1800 walk was probably motivated by a desire to visit family, although some sort of business transaction cannot be discounted as a co-reason for the trip. The 1794 march with the militia obviously was reason enough, although even then the diarist did take advantage of his opportunities to visit his relatives—those occasions surely were with the good graces of, and just as surely with the prior consent of, the officer corps.

Nonetheless, doubt remains that the diarist himself was a militia officer, despite the evidence of his finding, as officers were permitted to do, better quarters than the camps provided. Field officers were needed to, and required to, lead and keep order in the army on the march home. The diarist’s abandonment of the militia just as it started for Carlisle is not a sign of a conscientious military man, and it would not likely have been allowed. That is sufficient reason to disqualify him as an officer.

The diarist was not one of the regular, drafted militia either. Too many incidents of their misdeeds and unmilitarylike acts are on record to believe that one of them could repeatedly receive permission to leave camp, or could go without permission and not undergo some punishment such as strict confinement while encamped.

Therefore, he held some special position. He could leave and return as he saw fit. With one possible exception at Berlin, he did not miss any marching time or campsites, however, apparently instead taking leave only when no forward movement or raid against insurgents was imminent. He seems to have met all his duty requirements on the march west, then was released from further duty and, perhaps not merely coincidentally, from further strain on militia supplies and finances. A suspicion is raised that others of a perhaps similar standing and with means to fend for themselves may have had experiences during the expedition much like the diarist’s. And means he had, as his purchase of a horse attests. Such a thing doubtless would have been beyond the monetary capacity of the average militiaman on the march. Further, his keeping a journal of personal as well as militia events shows that he was comfortable with his
position—he had no fear of official reprisal if his extra-militia activities were found out.

Evidence might indicate that he was part of an advance unit, a scouting or other outfit somehow separated in duty and privilege from the mass of militiamen. More obvious is a clear indication that he did possess something of value which might have afforded him special status. He already knew people in the area, with whom he was almost certainly on good terms, and that could have held utmost potential both militarily and diplomatically. Also, he might have had far more familiarity with western geography as well as western people than is immediately evident. The 1794 march might not have been his first contact with western Pennsylvania. His knowledge and associations in themselves might have constituted an invaluable service, accounting for his standing. The diarist performed in good conscience in 1794 what he saw as his proper duty. His primary motivation does not appear to have been to punish or degrade fellow Pennsylvanians. Rather, he took seriously the armed threat to law and order and sought to help to prevent a widening, intensifying conflict. Surely by the end of the century, many western Pennsylvanians would agree that the insurrection had been legally insupportable and thus futile. It was the diarist’s choice to return then to the area he had tramped just over five years previously. Yet he showed no sign that he expected or feared antagonism from anyone in the west.

President Washington’s show of impressive force halted the insurgency. There was no overt resistance to the militia nor later attempt to revive the uprising, even if resentment of and hostility toward the excise remained strong. As the eighteenth century wore down, western Pennsylvanians experienced rapid improvement in security as well as in economic choices, although the area would continue to lag behind transmontane regions.

By all appearances, the diarist was able to find some enjoyable aspect of the 1794 march, despite the undeniable gravity of the situation, and then in essence repeat that trip in a more congenial setting. Now, more than two centuries later, he is able to relay something of his experiences. No matter how limited their importance in the big picture, his words can have value to those who might claim closeness to him or who have a special interest in the post-revolutionary era.
This section represents a general understanding of the situation in western Pennsylvania after the Revolution, which culminated in rebellion in 1794. Intended only as an adjunct to the work, it is purposely without annotation. Nevertheless, its main sources are Pennsylvania Archives, second series, volume IV; The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution; and Whiskey Rebels: The Story of a Frontier Uprising. Those works are identified at greater length in the selected bibliography appended to this report.


2 Linn and Egle PA, 2nd, IV, 13; Donehoo, Pennsylvania, 1009.

3 Linn and Egle PA, 2nd, IV, 13; Donehoo, Pennsylvania, 1009.

4 Prowell, York History, I, 341.

James Chambers, 1743-1805, was a son of Benjamin Chambers, founder of Chambersburg, Franklin County. James served with distinction during the Revolution, then became a county commissioner and an associate judge of Franklin County. His command in the Whiskey Rebellion comprised 1762 men—his troops were called by one writer of a brief history of that insurrection “the best equipped and best disciplined brigade in the expedition.” George O. Seilhamer, Biographical Annals of Franklin County, Pennsylvania, (n. p., 1905), reproduction (Evansville, IN, 1978), 4-6.


The State Road was an approximation of the earlier Forbes Road, which had undergone many improvements to shorten and ease its course, although it remained long and arduous. In modern terms, in 1794 the State Road westward from Carlisle nearly tracked US 11 southwest to Shippensburg, bore nearly directly west by several routes to an intersection with US 522 at Burnt Cabin, then headed west-southwest more or less along the Pennsylvania Turnpike to its junction with US 30 at Breezewood, and finally drove west on 30 through Bedford and northwest on that road to Pittsburgh.

The Glade Road was, and is, basically SR 31 from just west of Bedford southwest then northwest through Somerset and Mt. Pleasant to SR 136 east of West Newton on the Youghiogheny River. Near Mt. Pleasant it met the old Braddock Road.

Braddock Road west from Cumberland was approximately US 40, which enters Pennsylvania in Somerset County heading northwest through Uniontown and on across the Monongahela River. East of Uniontown, Braddock Road turned sharply north, hitting US 119 and following that general course to beyond Mt. Pleasant, then traced a tortuous path toward Pittsburgh. Louis M. Waddell and Bruce D. Bomberger,

For details of the daily marching and other militia activity, for the ordered route and schedule back to Carlisle, for details of conduct and discipline on the return, see Linn and Egle, *PA, 2nd*, IV, 239-40, 346-53, and 360-65; 380; and 382-84 respectively.


The right road was old Forbes Road/older Virginia Road, ostensibly nearly the same as present US 11. The left road likely was the 1794 version of modern Walnut Bottom Road. Waddell and Bomberger, *French and Indian War*, 38; ADC road atlas (1992).


The President’s return from Bedford began on October 21 and may have followed, for the most part, what is now US 30 via Chambersburg, York, and Lancaster back to Philadelphia. He wrote letters from Hartley’s (four miles east of Bedford) on the 21st and from Wright’s Ferry (Columbia, Lancaster County) on the 26th which suggest and permit that as his probable route. His letter on the 26th does mention passing “Skinners,” a site in Horse Valley, Franklin County, which indicates that he might have been heading for Shippensburg. However, just east of Skinner’s a road led south-southeast directly to Chambersburg. Jackson and Twohig, *Washington Diaries*, I, 197; Howell map (1792).

Once he reached Chambersburg, Washington could have traveled east on US 30 to its intersection with then Black’s Gap Road, then followed that roadway on now Hilltown, Goldenville, Hunterstown, and Swift Run Roads, all in present Adams County, until again meeting 30 a few miles west of New Oxford. He then would have been in position on the 23rd or, perhaps more likely, the 24th to pass the tavern of Joshua Russell, where, it has long been believed by many local people, he stopped. Heard also, although less frequently, is that the President stopped in Hunterstown that day. The route does conform to a certain logic, but no contemporary documentation places the President with certainty in now Adams County on that trip.

Besides, there is at least one claim which disputes that as Washington’s route. By the alternative account, the President spent the night of October 24 in Shippensburg and the next on the eastern edge of Cumberland County, at the Susquehanna River, which implies that, once he reached Carlisle, he returned to Philadelphia by the same path he had left it a month before. Doubtless, though, that would have prevented his
passage through York on the 25th, which he himself recorded. Egle, Notes and Queries, 225-26; Jackson and Twohig, Washington Diaries, I, 197.

That need not be the final word, however. If Washington indeed continued east past Skinner’s instead of turning shortly toward Chambersburg, likely he traveled directly to Shippensburg. A road southeast from that town went to Baltimore, a major market for much of what was produced in the region through which it ran. Its course was, and is, right through the heart of Adams County. It is now the “over the mountain” path many countians use to reach Shippensburg: the Mummasburg Road from Gettysburg to Arendtsville, SR 234 “through the narrows,” then onto Shippensburg Road and across Big Flat into Cumberland County, where the pathway becomes Baltimore Road right to Shippensburg. If the President rode east to Shippensburg and turned south, 20 miles farther on he would have reached present Goldenville Road, along which, just a short distance to the east, sat Russell Tavern, and just a few miles beyond that was Hunterstown. Thus, a compatibility of routes separately claimed is attained, which in theory permits both Shippensburg and Adams County to have hosted the President on that trip. Perhaps that very possibility accounts for the enduring, even though unconfirmed, story. Howell map (1792); ADC road atlas (1992).

It is possible that already the line of march was becoming strung out too far for easy contact and communication, so the vanguard was required to pause, thereby allowing trailing troops and supplies to catch up.

The map identifies Sideling Hill, but it is not clear that that shows the ridge as encountered in 1794. The road at the time might have crossed the ridge at a different location.

“The Crossens” (or Crossings) names the place where the Raystown Branch of the Juniata River was crossed, probably by fording. Likely, the site is now Juniata Crossing, a mile or so west of Breezewood and just a short distance into Bedford County.

From this point, daily distances traveled are recorded here usually in terms of modern roadways, since frequently it is neither clear how 1794 roads ran nor exactly where each campsite was located. Nor is there any known contemporary list of distances between campsites on the Glade Road route.
West of Bedford, US 30, which only very generally tracks Forbes Road, looped north, then south, then, after an overall westerly course for several miles, bore more or less northwest to Pittsburgh. SR 31, the Glade Road, continued south briefly on the western leg of the US 30 loop, crossing the Raystown Branch, which approximately parallels the north side of the dry ridge. At the base of the east end of the ridge, Buffalo Run flows north into the Raystown Branch. The campsite may have been along the run, at or near a place identified in 1792 as Wert’s, which arguably is Mann’s Choice today. Possible, nevertheless, is that the encampment was near the tavern of Jean Bonnet, at the junction of US 30 and SR 31—strictly speaking, however, Bonnet’s is not at the east end of the dry ridge. Howell map (1792); Barnes map (1848); ADC road atlas (1992).

The term “dry ridge” perhaps denotes that no stream descended its slopes. The ridge has another peculiarity. Rarely, indeed if anywhere else in this region of Pennsylvania’s mountains, can another like it be seen, so far out of the topographic norm. Its orientation is nearly directly east-west, opposed to its neighbors’ commonly northeast-southwest, or in some cases almost perfectly north-south, configuration.

Hughes Camp Run today is Little Wills Creek. Where the stream crosses SR 31, a small community called West End stands. That designation might identify the site as at either the western extremity of the dry ridge or the western boundary of present Bedford County.

A glade is defined as a naturally open space surrounded by woodland. An extensive area of present Somerset County has long been called “the glades” because of the numerous openings in the forest there. Additionally, at least two small streams and a town in the vicinity of Berlin carry the name Glade today. ADC road atlas (1992).

At about the midpoint of that day’s trek, the militia route left SR 31 at Deeter’s Gap to reach Berlin. The next leg of the march picked up 31 again at today’s Somerset, some seven miles beyond Berlin. ADC road atlas (1992).

Jacob Kable’s identification is uncertain, as is his residence. A Jacob Cebler lived in 1790 Bedford County, but in which part of the county has not been learned. By 1800, however, a Jacob Cable, Sr., lived in Brothers Valley Township, Somerset (taken out of Bedford in 1795) County. One, or both, might be the person named in the diary. In addition, a site about five miles southwest of Berlin, on Blue Lick Creek in Brothers Valley Township, was at one time called Cable’s. That place might be Berkleys Mill today and might have been the diarist’s brief refuge in 1794. Howell map (1792); ADC road atlas (1992); United States Federal Census, Pennsylvania: Bedford County, 1790, and Somerset County, 1800.

Officers were permitted to board at inns or private homes. Whether the diarist really was an officer is problematical, however. There were volunteers in the militia units, too, some of whom were well-to-do individuals who expected privileges not afforded to those drafted. Conceivably, as one of the privileged even if not an officer, the diarist was allowed to find better lodging where and when he could. Also possibly, although unlikely, discipline was so lax that such liberties could not be controlled effectively. Baldwin, Whiskey Rebels, 232-34; Slaughter, Whiskey Rebellion, 213-18.
Somerset is shown in 1792 as Anchony’s. That spelling apparently is a variant or a misguided form of Ankeny, for Peter Ankeny, who owned land which became the southern part of the town. Also shown, just north of Anchony’s, is Husband’s, for Harmon (or Herman) Husband, who owned what became the northern part of Somerset. Evidently, that Husband was also the man believed to have been one of the chief insurrectionists, being imprisoned in Philadelphia for a time because of his alleged activities. Waterman-Watkins, *Bedford History*, 444-46; Howell map (1792); Slaughter, *Whiskey Rebellion*, 276.

Jone’s (Jones’s) Mill was on the North Branch of Laurel Hill Creek or on a small tributary which descended the eastern slope of Laurel Hill. Likely, today it is the site of Bakersville. The ridge of that mountain marked the western boundary of Bedford (by the next year Somerset) County. Howell map (1792); ADC road atlas (1992).

Hover’s is only shakily identified. Presuming that the militia would almost necessarily camp near a sufficient supply of fresh water, it appears that Hover’s may have been on Indian Creek, either in Salt Lick Township, Fayette County, or in Donegal Township, Westmoreland County. One of several modern sites, perhaps Champion or Jones Mill, may be, or may be near, Hover’s. Howell map (1792); ADC road atlas (1992).

Cherry’s Mill is shown as on Jacobs Creek and as on or near the border of Westmoreland and Fayette Counties. Very likely, it was, or was near, present Laurelville, which lies in Mt. Pleasant Township, Westmoreland County. Laurelville is tucked into a corner south of Jacobs Creek and north of the county line, and for that reason it is assumed that the man apprehended lived in Westmoreland County. Maps.yahoo.com.

In 1790, a man named Ralph Cherry resided in each of the adjacent counties, although the Mt. Pleasant Township person’s given name was recorded as Relph. The other lived in Bullskin Township, Fayette County. By 1800, only one is seen, living in Smiths Township, Washington County. Census: Fayette and Westmoreland Counties, 1790, and Washington County, 1800.

A Ralph Cherry with a possible tie to the diarist emerged in an entirely different context ten years earlier. In 1784, Aaron and Ralph Cherry sold to William McGrue land in Westmoreland County which adjoined land of Alexander and Simon McGrue. McGrue (or McGrew) is a name of major importance to the diarist, as will become evident. In 1794, however, the McGrew families of known consequence to this work lived in North Huntingdon Township (later Sewickley Township for some of them), a considerable distance from the home area of Cherry at the time. *Westmoreland County Deeds*, vol. A-B, 541, in a typescript in the McGrew Family file, Adams County Historical Society, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

The sale of 300 acres of land surely places that Cherry outside the category of the very poor, landless people who were most imperiled by the whiskey excise. The
ownership or management of a mill known by his name also removes the man of the diary as a likely candidate to join or foment rebellion. Those are not certain bars to participation, however, since many motivating factors toward insurgency may have existed.

27 It is possible that Ralph Cherry filled another niche; he might have been, for example, an informant. If an insurrectionist, however, evidently he was one who fell under the blanket pardon offered, under authority of President Washington, by Commander-in-Chief of the expedition Henry Lee. Cherry’s name does not appear on a list of perpetrators of serious federal offenses who were not eligible for pardon. Linn and Egle, PA, 2nd, IV, 402-03; Waterman-Watkins, Bedford History, 112-13.

28 Linn and Egle, PA, 2nd, IV, 369.
29 Waterman-Watkins, Bedford History, 110.
30 Ibid., 111.

31 Whichever side of the Youghiogheny was Budd’s ferry base, undoubtedly the diarist’s militia unit remained east of the river. His notation of the next day’s march to a site on Sewickley Creek means that if they crossed the river on the 4th, they would have had to recross it on the 5th. That lacks credibility and it is clear that they never crossed the Youghiogheny. Therefore, the campsite on the 4th was in Westmoreland County. The site of Lodge’s might have been on SR 31—to get from there to within five miles of Budd’s Ferry probably places the camp southwest of New Stanton. Howell map (1792); Barnes map (1848); ADC road atlas (1992). For corroboration of the diarist’s account, see Baldwin, Whiskey Rebels, 235.

32 The site called Karnahans (probably Carnahan’s) is not known. Just as the move from Hover’s to within five miles of Budd’s necessarily was a short one, however, so must have been the march to Karnahans. Surely, “Swekley” equals “Sewickley,” and Sewickley Creek flows in Westmoreland County, therefore east of the Youghiogheny. It is joined by Little Sewickley Creek north of West Newton and shortly beyond that confluence empties into the Youghiogheny. If on the main branch of the creek, Karnahans might have been at today’s New Stanton or the small town of Hunker which is appended to the southern edge of the larger community. If on the tributary, it might have been near modern Herminie. ADC road atlas (1992); Waddell and Bomberger, French and Indian War, 13.

33 There is no reason to doubt that Simeon and James McGrew were closely related. A McGrew genealogy includes as children of James McGrew, ca.1707-1793, who lived in what is now Adams County, sons Simeon (or Simon), born ca. 1745, and James, 1750-1818, both of whom moved to now Sewickley Township, Westmoreland County. In both 1790 and 1800, each ostensibly lived in that county, in North Huntingdon Township, which then included what later became Sewickley Township.

But, since Simeon’s brother James reportedly moved into North Huntingdon Township after 1794, the James recorded in this entry likely was Simeon’s cousin, 1744-1805, who probably was situated in North Huntingdon by 1790. Mrs. Oliver Delong, comp., McGrew (Ft. Morgan, CO, pre-1965); census: Westmoreland, 1790 and 1800. See also note 53.

34 All those sites’ identifications are based on flimsy evidence. Nonetheless, they may

https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/ach/vol12/iss1/1
show a generally north and west movement that matches the militia’s. All descriptions which follow refer to places east of the Youghiogheny and the Monongahela.

A James Cavet lived in 1790 in Hempfield Township, Westmoreland County. Seemingly the same man resided in 1800 in the same county, but in Franklin Township.

Census: Westmoreland, 1790 and 1800.

A Mikel Helman was a resident of Versailles Township, Allegheny County, in 1790. Probably the same man was also there in 1795, his name then spelled Michael Hellman. Census: Allegheny, 1790; Thomas Cushing, ed., History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, vol. II (Chicago, 1889), 110.

A Hodew (Haden?) Mcannear [sic] lived in Pitt Township, Allegheny County, in 1790. He has not been found in 1800. Census: Allegheny, 1790.

The encampment near Pitt was on the Allegheny River. Baldwin, Whiskey Rebels, 235. Possibly, “Pitt” could refer to Ft. Pitt or even Pitt Township, although probably the town of Pittsburgh was meant. Confirmation might be seen in the diarist’s use of “Yough,” unquestionably to mean “Youghiogheny” (diary: November 4).

The extended stays at Hover’s, Karnahans, and finally Pitt might be taken as evidence that they were bases for rounding up insurrectionists.

35 Obviously, “mistfire” is “misfired,” that is, the powder charge failed to ignite properly, if at all, and so resulted in no propulsive effect to the shot. Maybe it was a “flash in the pan,” a literally exact term then, although now used in any situation of great promise but with little or no ensuing benefit.

36 A John Cavet was one of the original lot-owners of McKeesport, Allegheny County. Cushing, Allegheny History, I, 729.

A John Cavet lived in Franklin Township, Westmoreland County, in 1790. By 1800, three individuals of that name were in that township, one of them, however, too young to have been named ten years earlier. Apparently then, one of the other two in 1800 was also named in 1790. If so, in 1800 he was likely the one designated “Senr.” Whether any of the three in 1800, however, was also at some point a resident of McKeesport is not evident, but the likelihood is good. Census: Westmoreland, 1790 and 1800.

Whether James (see diary: November 10, and note 34) and John Cavet were related to each other or to the diarist has not been learned, but some good chance is present. Meeting two, if indeed the diarist met both, individuals with the same not very common surname in just nine days seems more than coincidental, especially since apparently he went to the second Cavet at his own instigation. Perhaps lessening the chances of a family connection to the diarist, however, is that no Cavet in Adams County has been identified.

37 Linn and Egle, PA, 2nd, IV, 380 and 382-83; Waterman-Watkins, Bedford History, 112; Baldwin, Whiskey Rebels, 253; Slaughter, Whiskey Rebellion, 219. Accounts differ with the diarist, however, Linn and Egle twice reporting, for example, that the return march was to begin on the 19th.

38 This time the friends remain unnamed. Nevertheless, because of the frequency and length of his visits, more likely the “friends” actually were relatives of the diarist. A logical assumption, too, is that, as he went from friend to friend, he was moving toward home in small increments of distance.
Having with him, or having access to, sufficient money to purchase a horse, saddle, and bridle further identifies him as not of the drafted militia and possibly also as having close relatives, a plausible source of money, in that vicinity.

The diarist wrote that York, not Cumberland (in which Carlisle lies), County was his destination. Since Carlisle was the mustering out point for the militia, he thus was unintentionally hinting that his militia service had indeed already ended and, moreover, that he was going home. Later events and people’s names recorded in the booklet which contains his diaries verify that he lived in York (by 1800 Adams) County.

His route home is unclear. He might have followed old Forbes Road, which by 1794 had been altered and was known as the Old Pennsylvania Road or the State Road. Linn and Egle, PA, 2nd, IV, 382; Waterman-Watkins, Bedford History, 112; Donehoo, Pennsylvania, 1009. Alternatively, he might have retraced, at least generally, his journey west, perhaps even seeing the McGrews again before heading east. But since he began a week after the militia left the area, eventually he would have had to pass them unless he reached Bedford by the southern route (Glade Road) before they arrived—they marched via the northern route. Apparently, the diarist did not get to Bedford first, yet his journal contains no further mention of the militia. There is a suggestion, however, in the diarist’s own words that he did wish to avoid encountering his former comrades on the open road. His actions for a couple of days reveal either an aversion to having to pass thousands of men plus the supply train, which surely would impede his own progress, or perhaps a dread of enduring some outward sign of militiamen’s resentment of his freedom from the march.

Reaching Laurel Hill on the first day necessitated a trip of probably over, perhaps well over, 30 miles—his starting point for that initial leg is not known. He might have stopped southeast of Ligonier if he took the State Road, or near Jones Mill if he used the Glade Road. Both sites are west of the ridge of Laurel Hill, on SR 381 at its intersection with US 30 and SR 31 respectively. ADC road atlas (1992).

Mann’s Choice is seven miles west of Bedford and likely was the stopping place. ADC road atlas (1992). See also note 18.

From his starting point just west of Bedford it is 58 miles to Chambersburg via US 30. Continuing east to Cashtown, then turning to Arendtsville adds another 21 miles. East from Arendtsville on SR 234, then north to the area where the extreme northern parts of Menallen, Tyrone, and Huntington Townships are in close proximity, the suspected home territory of the diarist, adds perhaps 10 more miles. It has not been substantiated, however, that the traveler could then ride the entire route on established roadways. Maps. yahoo; www.mapquest.com. For reasoning concerning the diarist’s home area, see note 45.

Perhaps he did stay on the State Road through Bedford to Shippensburg, that stretch covering 68 miles. He then could have continued east on Walnut Bottom Road to Lees Cross Roads, then turned southeast to Pine Grove Furnace and on into today’s Adams County very near his home, the total distance from Shippensburg some 20-plus miles. That nearly equals the distance by the US 30 route, but would have required his meeting up with the militia. Maps.yahoo; MapQuest; Howell map (1792).

Calling York County home perhaps was just an unthinking slip; after all, when
he started this journey, that was correct. It must be taken into consideration, though, that maybe he had no inkling that, after many years of effort, local people finally saw their work to be permitted their own county succeed. By today’s standards, news then could spread very slowly. Even word of the likelihood that Adams’s establishment was imminent, had it been heard in Gettysburg some time prior to his leaving home, might not have reached his ears. Evidently then, even eight days later he still had not heard of it.

If he walked only, or mostly, in daylight, he probably proceeded no more than 10 or 12 miles the first day. By whatever measure, he was then still some miles short of Shippensburg. See note 47.

See notes 33 and 53 for the tie of the McGrew families of Westmoreland and Adams Counties, the latter of whom lived in the vicinity speculated as the diarist’s home—the upper reaches of Opossum and Bermudian Creeks flow through that part of Adams. See also note 61 for a miller with a McGrew tie.

Although George Coch (probably Koch or Cook) has not been found there in the 1800 federal census, almost certainly he lived in Cumberland County. A George Cook did reside then in Adams County, but in Mt. Pleasant Township and so too far from Shippensburg in the context of the diary. Census: Adams, 1800.

Six pence is the smallest amount the diarist paid for lodging on this trip. He paid twelve times as much on another occasion and over ten times as much on three others. He paid only eight pence once, apparently in early- or mid-afternoon and plausibly for food. He recorded making such payments on twelve of his fifteen days on the road, totaling in all just over £2 and averaging about 40½ pence, or 3/4½d, per day. See also note 52 for a different type of payment.

The recorded distance evidently agrees very closely with Linn and Egle, PA, 2nd, IV, 380, which shows Shippensburg and Ft. Lyttleton as 28 miles apart. Since Fannettsburg is 19 miles from Shippensburg, he began the day some nine miles short of Shippensburg, therefore somewhere nearly midway between Pine Grove Furnace and Lees Cross Roads and credibly no more than 12 miles from home. Thus, likely he had no need to walk in the dark the first day. Evidently too, he began the second day’s walk in mid-morning if he did not pass Shippensburg until noon.

The diarist’s recorded mileage often is surprisingly accurate. How he calculated time and distance is not clear. Perhaps an uncanny sense of time and pace is as believable an explanation as any of his ability to arrive at nearly correct distances so frequently. Having with him an accurate timepiece seems unlikely because of its presumed cost. It is probable that signposts existed, but how common would they have been and how many would have shown tiny communities or individual residences or lodging sites? Possibly though, distances to sites within 20 or 30 miles were commonly known throughout the region, and therefore a traveler might have needed only to inquire about, at each place he stopped, the walking time and/or distance to one or two lodging places ahead on his intended route.

His 37 miles from Fannettsburg to Bloody Run (today called Everett) is by modern roadways about 39 miles, which arguably is an unrealistic day’s walk in the
rugged mountains in that part of the state. That appears to make Ft. Lyttleton, eight miles nearer Everett, a better option as the true starting point that day and more in line with the usual distances he walked in a day. But that alternative then would have necessitated a 36-mile leg the previous day, which began likely several hours after sunrise and so would have required an all-but-impossible pace. In addition, denying his 37 miles in a full day, no matter how difficult the terrain, also denies for two consecutive days his otherwise accurate gauging of distance. See also note 56.

Probably it can be assumed, of course, that any horseman would walk at times, leading his horse in difficult areas and in situations of dangerous or unsure footing. The diarist himself perhaps settles the question: in 1794, after he acquired a horse, he wrote that he rode, not marched (1794 diary entries: November 25-27).

Following the route of the 1794 march would have taken the diarist past Bedford and then down present SR 31. That is presumed to have been his 1800 course, by which he would have reached a site now called Dividing Ridge, about 31 miles from Everett. The name and distance are nearly perfectly matched to the diarist’s record and are a startling testimony to his accuracy.

Arguably, this leg did not extend across Laurel Hill. It is now about 21 miles from Dividing Ridge to Bakersville at the eastern base of Laurel Hill and 29 to Jones Mill on the western side. ADC road atlas (1992).

Although the site of Widow Logwood’s lodging house has not been identified, a Hanah [sic] Logwood was head of house in 1800 in Somerset Township, Somerset County, which does place her somewhere east of the ridge of Laurel Hill. Census: Somerset, 1800.

At this point it is even more evident that the militia path in 1794 was also followed in 1800. Therefore, the trek on the 26th might have reached New Stanton or Hunker, perhaps the same site identified in 1794 as Karnahans. If so, then advancing 12 miles beyond that would easily place the traveler in North Huntingdon Township, Westmoreland County, where Simeon McGrew lived. Also, it is 12 miles from Hunker to some parts of present Sewickley Township, which may more closely define Simeon’s residence. See 1794 diary: November 4-6, and notes 32 and 33.

Also on the 27th, the diarist “Changd boots gave ½ a doller paid 2/5.” In those few words he noted paying for food and lodging with money of one medium of exchange and buying boots, or trading for a pair which were at least dry, with money of another currency. Fifty cents to seal either a purchase or a swap appears to be a more-than-fair deal for the diarist. The use of dollar-based money only this one time is not understood, however, even if multiple currencies were still commonly used.

The payment for lodging for the night of January 26-27 was the last recorded until after he began the homebound trip. That is viewed as another sign that the friends he visited were in reality his relatives. See notes 38 and 53.

James McGrew, Sr., may have been the son, 1744-1805, of Finley McGrew, who lived in what became Adams County. James lived in North Huntingdon Township in both 1790 and 1800. Delong, McGrew; census: Westmoreland, 1790 and 1800.

James McGrew, Jr., likely was the son, 1750-1818, of Finley McGrew’s brother James, who also had resided in the future Adams County. James, Jr., is
recorded as having moved to the area of Redstone, on the Monongahela River in Fayette County, in 1794. That fits his first census appearance in the west in 1800, even though by then he lived in North Huntingdon Township, Westmoreland County. Delong, McGrew; census: Westmoreland, 1800.

Thus, the Jameses identified as senior and junior were cousins. Simeon McGrew was the brother of James, Jr., and therefore also a cousin of James, Sr. Simeon had lived in the west since sometime before 1790. Delong, McGrew; census: Westmoreland, 1790 and 1800.

Brothers Finley and James McGrew had a brother William who also had a son named James, but a third James in Westmoreland County has not been found. Finley and William, plus a fourth brother, John, also had sons named Archibald. John’s Archibald married Martha Bracken and died about 1805 in Adams County. Which possible Archibald was visited by the diarist is not clear. Delong, McGrew; estate files, Adams County Historical Society.

John McGrew also had a daughter Catharine, 1724-1828 (those dates are as recorded), who therefore was also a cousin of Simeon and the Jameses Sr. and Jr. Catharine married William Boyd, ca. 1726-1785, in now Adams County—William died there. He had acquired, however, land in North Huntingdon Township, Westmoreland County, which passed to his son John. After her husband’s death, Catharine and at least some of her children moved to Westmoreland County; sons William, ca.1751-1846, and John, 1761-1815, resided there, in North Huntingdon Township, in 1800. Additionally, John Boyd married Ruth McGrew, daughter of Archibald and Martha (Bracken) McGrew, so John and Ruth were also cousins of each other. Those Boyd brothers, William and John, are probably the Boyd “friends” visited by the diarist. Delong, McGrew; Scott Lee Boyd, comp. and publ., The Boyd Family (Santa Barbara, CA, 1935); census: Westmoreland, 1790 and 1800.

54 Perhaps, while on his clearly short excursions from friend to friend, he had left much of his travel gear at Simeon’s. Perhaps, in order to travel more quickly and easily to each visiting place, he had borrowed or rented a horse.

55 Lovingere’s identification is very unsure. Even though no stop on his return is clear until he reached Bedford, likely the diarist again used the route which by then was becoming familiar. Thus, if he had stopped at Hunker the night before he got to Simeon McGrew’s, seemingly a very real possibility, then his 15-mile walk, the first homeward leg after leaving Simeon’s, probably brought him near Mt. Pleasant. That further suggests that Rover’s in 1794 and Lovingere’s in 1800 identify the same site, or sites closely placed. ADC road atlas (1992); 1794 diary: analysis and notes of October 29 plus corrected text in the analysis paragraphs which follow immediately.

Possible corroboration of the placement of Lovingere’s at Mt. Pleasant might be seen in census details. In both 1790 and 1800 John and Christopher Lobengire (also spelled Lobinguire and Lovinguire) lived in Mt. Pleasant Township, Westmoreland County; in the latter year a Widow Lobinguire also resided there. Census: Westmoreland, 1790 and 1800.

56 This day of 37 miles is the second of that distance recorded. On this occasion it included traversing Chestnut Ridge and Laurel Hill, which probably was not as
wearing a walk as his crossing of Sideling Hill on the westward trip a week earlier, although on a very cold day. Even at a four-miles-per-hour pace, which surely would have been difficult to maintain in any mountainous terrain, he would have been on the road for over nine hours. With about ten hours of sunlight available at that time of year, and with another hour or so of twilight, he appears to have walked literally “from dawn to dusk,” if not longer.

“Cimbles” is an uncertain reading, as is interpreting it to represent Kimble’s or Kimball’s. Berlin, or perhaps Macdonaldton a few miles to the east, might have been the quitting point on the 30th, making the day’s walk approximately 31 miles by one measurement, but almost 40 by another which, however, follows a not very direct course. ADC road atlas (1992); maps, yahoo.

The division into townships to separate the residents of Bedford County was not used by census personnel in 1790. That year, five apparently possible Cimbles lived in the county, the surname of each spelled Kimel: John, David, George, Jacob, and Philip. Four of them are found within two pages of each other in the census, but no placement within the county has been attempted. Their residence in 1800 Somerset County also has not been ascertained, even though all the above-named except Philip, their surname this time spelled Kimmel, lived there. David, George, and Jacob were in Stonycreek Township, while John was in Berlin (Brothers Valley?) Township. Seemingly, any one of the four might have hosted the diarist, although John is perhaps most likely. Census: Bedford, 1790, and Somerset, 1800.

57 The word written is possibly “midleg,” which in this context likely would mean essentially the same as “middling.” Because of the diarist’s spelling, however, “midleg” is considered less likely—later in the same entry he wrote “morning” as “mornig,” which shows the same spelling tendency as does “midlig” to mean “middling.”

58 The 24 miles in fresh and falling snow may have been as amazing a total as the 37 of the previous day. The diarist was still west of Bedford, as the entry of the next leg reveals. It is certainly feasible, perhaps likely, that he tramped from Berlin to Mann’s Choice, about 23 miles by modern reckoning. ADC road atlas (1992).

Mr. Kynton may have been the John Cinten living in Bedford County in 1790 and the John Kinton recorded in 1800 as residing in the same county, either in St. Clair or Bedford Township. Census: Bedford, 1790 and 1800.

59 The day’s trek surely began before noon—the 24 miles recorded is excessive for half a day, even if he trudged on in the dark in order to reach a specific (or indeed any) lodging place.

There is uncertainty too in where “this side the crossings” was intended to designate. The diarist might have written from the perspective of the direction he was heading, meaning therefore west of the crossing of the Raystown Branch, or he might have been thinking in relationship to his home, indicating thus the eastern side. Actually, the latter appears to be more likely, for it is about 24½ miles from Mann’s Choice to Breezewood. MapQuest.

60 “Below strawburgh” is understood to mean, for the same reasoning given in note 59 (that is, the diarist was thinking from the perspective of his home), to the west of the community.
A monumental problem is present, nonetheless, in the stated distance between the last two stops, 34 miles. In 1794, an official record showed the distance from Strasburg to The Crossings to be 49 miles! Walking such a distance in one day on level ground and in comfortable weather is hardly doable; without question, in the diarist’s situation it would have been impossible. His record was never so far from actual mileage. The only ostensibly justifiable conclusion is that, for some inexplicable reason, he wrote the wrong name as the site of that day’s terminus. So, since by the mileage recorded officially in 1794 The Crossings is 32 miles from Ft. Lyttleton, that latter place, not Strasburg, appears to be and is taken to be the site that should have been named. Linn and Egle, *PA, 2nd*, IV, 380; ADC road atlas (1992).

The 30 miles (from near Ft. Lyttleton) would have brought the traveling companions at least as far as Shippensburg, and plausibly somewhat farther, maybe in reality as far as present Lees Cross Roads. Linn and Egle, *PA, 2nd*, IV, 380; ADC road atlas (1992).

Co-traveler Edward Weakley was referred to only this day and it is assumed that the next day he continued east toward his own home. Likely, this was someone known by the diarist. A man of that name, 1743-1817 (if the same, clearly a very hardy individual, walking 30 miles on a cold snowy day at age 56 or 57), was a resident of Dickinson Township, Cumberland County, where he operated a grist mill. His brother William Weakley had a daughter, Esther, who married William McGrew, son of Archibald and Martha (Bracken) McGrew (see note 53). Census: Cumberland, 1800; McGrew and Weakley Family files, Adams County Historical Society.

William R. Sadler, 1809-1853, was a son of Richard and Agnes (Lewis) Sadler. A resident of Huntington Township, Adams County, he first appeared on tax rolls in 1835 with 123 acres of land “of John McGrew.” He married Agnes, daughter of John and Patience McGrew—in the 1839 will of Patience, of which he was executor, Sadler was recorded as husband of Agnes. In 1847, he was elected state senator from the district comprised of Adams and Franklin Counties. He was buried in the Hampton cemetery. Card, tax, and estate files, Adams County Historical Society; Warner, Beers & Co., publ., *History of Cumberland and Adams Counties* (Chicago, 1886), second reprint of part by The Bookmark as 1886 *History of Adams County, Pennsylvania* (McKnightstown, IN, 1980), 88.

More than one Josiah Kerr lived in Adams County at the time of interest, each in Mt. Pleasant Township. The eldest, 1715-1784, married a Mary who died in 1804. He was buried in The Pines cemetery, near New Chester. It is unlikely that he is the person referred to in the booklet. Perhaps two or more other Josiah Kerrs also resided in Mt. Pleasant Township. Information here has not been assigned to any particular Josiah, however.

A Josiah was taxed in 1778 with 200 acres. Apparently two of the name were taxed in 1779 or 1780, one of them unmarried. One was taxed in 1783 with 350 acres. The next tax listing for a Josiah is for 1807, again of a single man, who perhaps married about 1818 and acquired 113 acres by the next year; that land evidently was sold about 1828. A Josiah married Sarah Reynolds in 1780. One sold Mt. Pleasant Township property in 1825. One married a Mary who died in 1836. One apparently moved to Darke County, Ohio. Card and tax files, Adams County Historical Society.
Ludwig Waltemire, who died in 1838, lived in, or at times only held land in, Huntington Township, Adams County. Around 1800, tax information reveals that he then was a resident of Cumberland County. He appeared in York/Adams County tax lists for a half-century, with 30 acres as early as 1783. Over the next two decades he appeared on county tax rolls about half the time, usually with land and called once a weaver. In 1807, his land holdings began to increase in acreage, reaching as high as 306 acres in 1814 before beginning a period of frequent falls and rises. Card and tax files, Adams County Historical Society. 

The money sum in the Waltemire entry, with the crown as its base, is not often seen in that form. A crown is a former British coin, usually of silver, equal in value to five shillings. Translating the given amount to the commonly encountered pound base shows £2-8-3, a significant sum of money in the county at the time. 

The only possible person in Adams County named Blish at the probable time of the entry was Dr. Charles Blish, 1792-1861, who was born in Massachusetts and who moved into the county in 1817, settling in Hampton, Reading Township. In 1822 he married Rebecca, daughter of John and Patience McGrew and sister of Agnes Sadler (see note 62). He was named as son-in-law of John McGrew in, and was executor of, McGrew’s 1826 will. In 1835 he was selected first postmaster of the Hampton post office. Card, tax, and estate files, Adams County Historical Society; Warner-Beers, Adams History, 118. 

The line in the entry transcribed as “Blish x Linch” is understood likely to indicate a partnership or some other close affiliation. Although no connection has been uncovered, a Linch of the same vicinity, speculated to be the right man, has been found. 

John Lynch, ca. 1792-1869, whose surname is sometimes seen as Linch, was first taxed as a single man in Reading Township in 1822. Subsequently, he married Mary Slagle and was taxed only for his occupation—like Ludwig Waltemire, he was called then a weaver. By 1833, he lived, and apparently farmed, in Hamilton Township, having acquired 87 acres there. In 1860, he first appeared in Straban Township with a lot (and presumably a house). He was buried In New Chester, only three miles from Hampton. Card and tax files, Adams County Historical Society. 


Although evidence is compelling that this John was indeed a son of Archibald and Martha (Bracken) McGrew, Delong suggests that he was a son of John, father of the same Archibald (see note 53). The younger John and Archibald were postulated to have had different mothers and thereby were half-brothers. It is a position difficult to support. 

John McGrew was taxed for 200 acres in Huntington Township, Adams County, possibly even before 1780, which hints at his birth in the 1750s, if not earlier. His grandfather, also named John, had died in 1775, so it does appear that the younger man was the one taxed. That, however, is supposition only, for in 1786 grandson John had that property surveyed, its true acreage measured as slightly over 273. The survey
could imply that the grandfather’s name had remained on tax rolls, even after his
death, until the land was sold or until one of his heirs acquired final, legal rights to it.
In that may be a further hint that grandson John was born in the 1760s. By 1793, the
grandson’s acreage was recorded as 275, and later as 280.

In 1808 the adjoining 300-acre tract of his father, Archibald, was added to
John’s tax burden, indication of his acquisition of that land. Gradually, he disposed
of much of the total property, which lay about a mile east of present Idaville, and
which stretched from a bit south of the road linking Petersburg (now York Springs)
and Pine Grove Furnace northward nearly to the Cumberland County line. That,
with no question, placed him in the area proposed as the likely home of the diarist,
although perhaps a couple of miles must be added to the estimated 21 from his home to
Shippensburg (see notes 45 and 47). Tax and land draft files, Adams County Historical

By 1818, John had moved into a house in Middleton, also in Huntington
Township. That village was on the Petersburg-Pine Grove Furnace Road and was just
five miles from the latter site. There he operated a tavern, evidently for the rest of his
life—he received tavern license renewals through 1826. Over the years, Middleton's
name was changed more than once, called at times Whitestown, Smyerstown, and
its modern name, Idaville. It had another name, too, one of special notice here:
McGrewsburg! Long, “Notes on Idaville.”

The distance is subject to, and dependent on, interpretation. If “below strawsburgh”
recorded on February 2 accurately names his stopping place that day, he was some 16
miles nearer Shippensburg. By that reading, his total return mileage from Lovingere’s
(Mt. Pleasant) to Shippensburg was 131, very near his logged total west!

But that then creates two seemingly insupportable legs of his eastward
journey. First, no rational explanation for an actual 49-mile day on the 2nd appears
possible, nor does one for a one-time-only wild deviation from reality in his calling
that distance 34 miles. Second, the 30-mile walk on the 3rd, if from “strawsburgh,”
might very well have taken him home, keeping in mind that his calculations, no matter
how frequently accurate, surely were estimates and that the courses of his roadways
might often have varied from present ones. Even if he was an hour, or even more, from
home as darkness fell on the 3rd, likely he would have continued walking until he was
home. An explanation is needed also, in that scenario, for the reason Edward Weakley
received no more mention if indeed he accompanied the diarist to Adams County.
Finally, if the diarist was home, or nearly home, by the 3rd, it seems extremely odd that
he would choose to, and take time to, record in his journal on the 4th an apparent fee for
the previous night’s lodging, plus the weather conditions that morning, but nothing of
his safe arrival home.
Selected Bibliography

A still useful account told from the perspective of western Pennsylvanians.

A summary of the events leading to the militia march, which itself is barely mentioned.


An account of the president’s thinking and motivation.

Based on the president’s words, a work of much detail, which includes numerous explanatory and source annotations.


Brief, but contains specific information on the county’s contribution.

An excellent work in all aspects, includes research in obscure sources; profusely annotated.

Over a million and a half tourists visit Gettysburg every year, finding the quintessence of American history in the borough and surrounding battlefields. Had the great battle been fought elsewhere, it is likely that Gettysburg’s legacy in American history would instead be the town where Thaddeus Stevens spent the formative years of his legal practice and political career. As the subtitle to Dr. Bradley R. Hoch’s new book, Thaddeus Stevens in Gettysburg: The Making of an Abolitionist, makes abundantly clear, it is also the town where the man often put forward as the most radical of Radical Republicans formulated his views on slavery and race relations. For this alone Dr. Hoch’s work is an important contribution for those looking for an understanding of the Civil War era. But the first fifty years of Stevens’ life – the period covered in depth in this book – presents a microcosm of the time, including a rough and tumble litigious society, splinter political factions, challenges to duels, and the last remnants of frontier-style violence. For this, Dr. Hoch’s book is worthy of a larger audience.

Thaddeus Stevens in Gettysburg is likely to have appeal to three types of readers: those with an abiding interest in Stevens; those with an interest in the history of Gettysburg; and those with an interest in the history of the legal profession.

Stevens was born in Vermont in 1792. Following graduation from Dartmouth College, he moved to Pennsylvania to teach at the York County Academy. He studied law in his spare time, and was admitted to the bar in 1816, when he moved to Gettysburg. He made Gettysburg his home until he moved to Lancaster in 1842. Hoch provides an in-depth description and analysis of Stevens’ twenty-six years in Gettysburg, including his prosperous legal career, tenure on the board of directors of the Bank of Gettysburg, disastrous forays into real estate and iron-making, and, of course, his political career. Hoch maintains that Stevens’ career was aided by the “timely deaths of two of his contemporaries,” and that Stevens “was not above the exploitation of government for personal financial gain,” especially in the case of his notorious “Tapeworm Railroad.” The often-confusing intricacies of mid-nineteenth century American politics are laid out for the reader, as Stevens’ first political successes came as a member of the Anti-Masonic party. This movement, along with Anti-Jackson politics, the Loco-Focos, and the Buckshot War, are all concisely explained and well documented as to their influence on Stevens’s career.

Perhaps the most significant chapter of the book is devoted to Stevens development as an abolitionist. Early in his Gettysburg legal career, Stevens represented slave owners involved in legal proceedings to have their runaway slaves returned to them. Fifty years later, Stevens was the leading proponent of the Fourteenth Amendment. Hoch pinpoints the transformation to events of 1835-1837, which led Stevens to move from personally opposing slavery to becoming an outspoken public opponent and one of the nineteenth-century’s most important civil rights advocates.
Hoch documents Stevens' work with Gettysburg-area anti-slavery societies, his advocacy for education for African Americans, and, most intriguing, his insistence of running the Caledonia Iron Works at a loss to provide not only jobs for his African American workers but also perhaps a station for the Underground Railroad.

Throughout the book, Dr. Hoch provides vivid vignettes of the Gettysburg area. Descriptions of the layout of the original courthouse (which stood in the center of the Diamond, now Lincoln Square), the gallows for public executions (in the “Y” formed by Baltimore and Emmitsburg Streets), and the proto-industrial atmosphere of the charcoal facilities at Stevens’s Caledonia Iron Works enliven the book and add to its value.

Stevens practiced law for all twenty-six years he resided in Gettysburg, and his legal experiences represent a large chunk of this book. Hoch employs a system of alternating chapters in which a chapter describing a legal case precedes a chapter discussing a particular aspect of Stevens’ life – a chapter on Stevens’ involvement in the legal cases that arose of the Christiana riots, for example, precedes a discussion of his evolution as an abolitionist. Hoch’s ability to capture the essence of the nineteenth-century legal profession provides a rich subtext to the book. Those who worry that American society in the twenty-first century is too litigious will perhaps find comfort in the enormous number of lawsuits in which Stevens was either a plaintiff or a defendant (these are nicely identified in an appendix), let alone those in which he served as counsel.

Dr. Hoch’s medical background adds a distinctive value to the book. Hoch speculates that an early client of Stevens suffered from Korsakoff’s psychosis, a vitamin deficiency sometimes found in alcoholics that causes memory lapses and dysfunctional nerves. He utilizes psychological studies to show that Stevens, like other males born into poverty, are “at a greater risk than the general population for the development of hyperactivity and oppositional behavior” and that children with deformities (Stevens had a famous club foot) often had few friendships. These and other examples bring a different perspective to the well-known events of Stevens’s life.

Dr. Bradley Hoch’s Thaddeus Stevens in Gettysburg: The Making of an Abolitionist will take its place alongside Richard Nelson Current’s Old Thad Stevens (1942) and Hans L. Trefousse’s Thaddeus Stevens: Nineteenth Century Egalitarian (1997) for insight into the life of one of the nineteenth century’s political giants. Furthermore, Dr. Hoch has given Gettysburg residents a detailed and lively look into a period of their past which has received scant attention when compared to the events of the Civil War.

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