The following article was originally published in the *Philadelphia Times*, June 20, 1878, and was transcribed by Mike Bertram

VALLEY FORGE

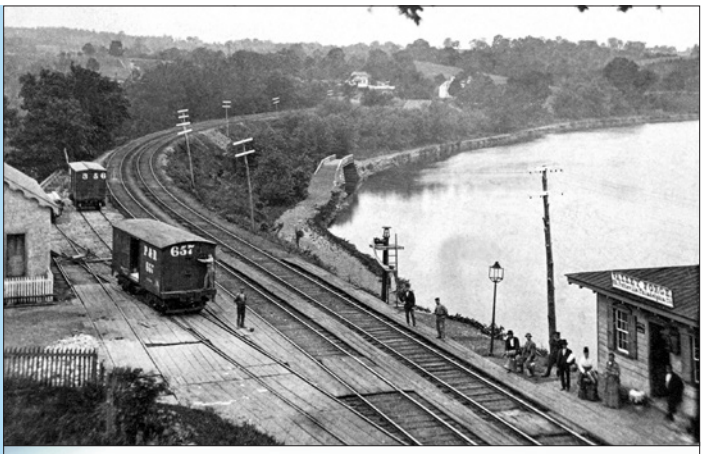
A SUNNY CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

An Immense Gathering of Pennsylvanians Upon the Historic Banks of the Schuylkill—A Brilliant Military Display Reviewed by Governor Hartranft
The Oration by Henry Armitt Brown

The scowling skies of Tuesday gave place yesterday to a delightful specimen of June weather, and all of Montgomery county, with many thousands from elsewhere, celebrated to their entire satisfaction the centennial anniversary of Washington's evacuation of the heights at Valley Forge. Upon those highest points of land between Phoenixville and France were assembled more people than had ever been there before, and probably will ever be there again. Throughput the morning extra and regular trains, packed with excursionists from Norristown, Conshohocken, Philadelphia, Phoenixville, Pottstown, Reading, West Chester, Media and many other points, rolled along to the Valley Station, which is just a hop, step, and jump from Washington's headquarters, on the western border of the little village bearing the historic name. Everyone stopped to look at the famous old pointed-stone farm house, whose front was decorated with a likeness of Washington, bunting and shields. Comparatively few, however, entered the building because on the two gates of the shady and beautiful front and side was placaded "Admission Ten Cents." It seemed to be generally understood that this was for the private gain of Mrs. Ogden, the kind and intelligent owner and occupant, whereas it was to help defray the cost of the celebration and the intended purchase of the property by the Centennial Association, whose energetic "Lady Regent," Mrs.W. H. Holstein, presided all day at the headquarters, receiving visitors, supplying excellent meals at moderate cost, and selling maps and historical sketches of Valley Forge.

THE THREE CENTRES

There were three special centres of attraction, namely: The village, containing, in addition to Washington's house, the headquarters of the chief marshall, Major General Gregg, of Reading, and a tent erected for the accommodation of Governor Hartranft, who, with Major General Hancock, Adjutant General Latta, and Mr. George Bullock, who arrived from Norristown about 8 o'clock; the two heights, half a mile south of the village, containing the principal entrenchments, and upon the eastern one of which was erected the large tent, capable of accommodating nine thousand persons, in which the chief ceremonies of the day were held; and the neighborhood of Mr. I. Heston Todd's farm-house and barn, three-quarters of a mile still further south. Mr. Todd's residence was Huntingdon's quarters a century ago and is well preserved. Just north of it is a gently-inclined fifteen-acre field, in which yesterday's review of the military took place and where Varnum had his





ABOVE: Philadelphia & Reading Railroad station at Valley Forge, 1870's. Note the Schuylkill Navigation Company towpath bridge over the mouth of Valley Creek. At this time the P&R mainline operated on a "left-running" system. So the track closer to the river was for trains headed toward Philadelphia. In 1890 the overall P&R operating system was changed to the more uniform American system of right-hand running. From stereoscopic slide by S. R. Fisher. *Courtesy Robert Cohen collection.*
BELOW: View of the station as seen in April 2022. *Courtesy of John O. Senior.*

headquarters and his men were housed during Washington's encampment. A flag here indicated where remnants of the huts could be found with a little rooting. In the upper part of the field stands Washington's oak, and a few hundred yards east of that, on the opposite side of the Philadelphia road, are the woods in which most of the visiting military have been encamped and will remain until to-morrow, and which is the place where nearly all of the dead of Washington's suffering

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little army are buried, several graves there being marked by rude stone slabs containing illegible inscriptions. At points varying from a hundred paces to half a mile west of the big tent (which stood on a spot that was occupied by the huts of Huntingdon's men) and Mr. Todd's house, are the breastworks and other remains of the positions held by Wayne, Scott, Knox, Muhlenberg, Patterson, Conway, Poor, Weedon and the rest of Washington's principal officers.

THE STIR IN THE VILLAGE

Just at sunrise the Valley Forge Band marched to Washington's headquarters and played national airs while the stars and stripes were being hoisted on a tall pole in front of the building. One of the earliest birds in the village was an individual that Valley Forge has never known before - the professional bootblack, and the Philadelphia bootblack at that, who had come up numerously during the night, some as coal-train dead-heads, but most of them, with a lot of camp followers, afoot, the entire twenty-three and a half miles. These, with a formidable array of Jehus on improvised hacks and a countless army of visiting vendors, were astir before daylight. Most of the fast-arriving crowds of people started without delay on the road to the heights, but several thousand remained in the village, attracted by the printed programme's announcement that at half-past eight the Governor would hold a reception at his headquarters and at nine a memorial service would be conducted at the picnic grounds, near by. But from his arrival until half-past nine the Governor and his companions sat upon the porch fronting the residence of Mr. Smith, president of the Centennial Association, while his tent stood deserted on the opposite side of the road. The Gubernatorial party were looking at a procession of the military which had formed at General Gregg's headquarters and was moving to the tented woods, where the troops decorated with flowers the graves of the Continental soldiers. "The Governor's reception" did not take place for the simple reason that, according to his own words, he know nothing about it until after the appointed hour. The crowd, tired of waiting for the event, began moving toward the more southern places of attraction, and, in consequence of this those who were to conduct the memorial services packed up and started for the big tent.

AT THE CAMP

Four military bodies, including the Griffin Battery (six guns), of Reading, had encamped upon or near the burying ground all night. General Gregg and staff were the guests of Mr. Todd, and the Washington Grays, of this city, whose fine appearance in parade attracted general notice, bunking in that gentleman's barn, excepting the coterie of their members called P. D. Q. Club, of which Carmany, the Chestnut street haberdasher, is president. The P. D. Q.'s had a right royal time in a tent of their own. Before it blazed a huge campfire, at which half a dozen camp followers who had tramped all the way from Nicetown, were permitted to warm their shins as they listened to the yarns of the P. D. Q.'s and their guests. No flame was allowed in the barn, but the boys were enabled to read and play euchre in the remotest corners, owning to a calcium light fixed just outside the front doorway and causing a brilliant and picturesque scene. The other troops, being well supplied with straw and blankets and having fires constantly blazing, appeared to suffer little from the wet ground and chilly air. The reveille was sounded at daylight and at sunrise the Griffin Battery, drawn up along the summit of the graveyard hill, which rises gradually from the Schuylkill, and, with their guns pointing directly over the old ford where the Continental army crossed when evacuating the place, fired a "Federal salute" of thirteen guns. A few hours later civic and military organizations were fast arriving from all points and the fifteen-acre field became a lively scene of preparation for the review.

THE MEMORIAL SERVICE

In the meantime the memorial service was going on in the large tent, having begun at ten o'clock, but without a great audience, as the people, many thousands of whom had never seen the place before, were scattered here and there to look at the entrenchments and forts. The Rev. Job F. Hasley presided at the services, which consisted of a dirge (Kurek's) by the Phoenix Military Band; invocation by Professor F. A. Muhlenberg, D. D., and the Rev. A. F. Wendell; singing of the hymn "Before Jehovah's Awful Throne" by a chorus of three hundred and fifty voices, recruited from Reading, Pottstown, Spring City, The Trappe, Phoenixville, Norristown, Conshohocken, and Manayunk, under the leadership of Mr. John O. K. Roberts, of Phoenixville, musical director of the day; "responsible service" by the Right Rev. M. A. De Wolff Howe, D. D., LL.D., and the Revs. Isaac Gibson and John Dyson; reading of Deuteronomy, 28, 1: 14, by the Revs. W. P. Breed and William A. Jenks; the anthem, "Erect Your Heads, Eternal Gates," by the chorus; prayer by the Rev. P. S. Henson, D. D.; the hymn, "God Bless Our Native Land," by all, the Lord's Prayer by the Rev. Henry M. Kieffer; Doxology by the chorus; Benediction by the Rev. J. Grier Ralston, D. D., LL.D., and the hymn, "Amen, Amen, Amen," by the chorus.

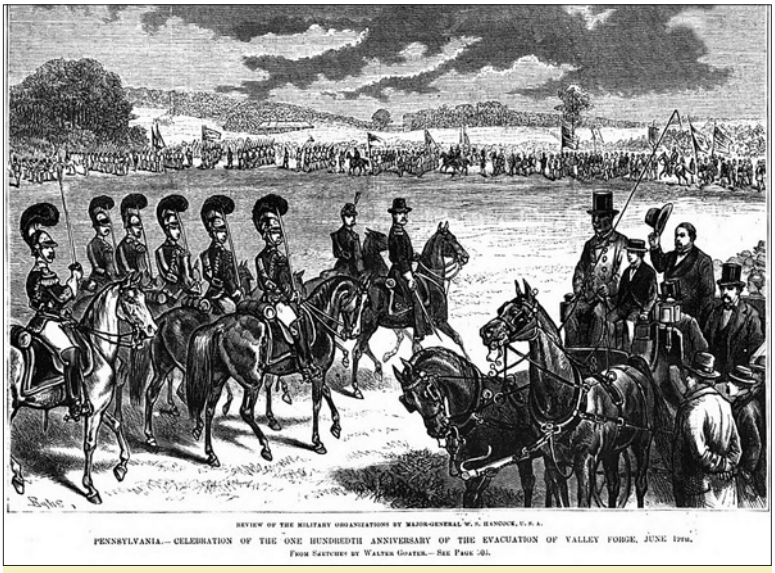
THE REVIEW

With great difficulty the Washington troop, of Paoli, constantly galloping along the boundaries of Todd's field, managed to keep the fast swelling mass of humanity forming a square from pressing beyond an imaginary line inside and six or seven feet from the sides. The fence, entirely covered by squatting men, women and children, that suggested so many crows, gave way at many points to the weight, prostrating all in a promiscuous heap, to be laughed at by others, who would no sooner finish their "ha, ha!" than they would meet with the same ludicrous mishap. At half-past ten a barouche, containing Governor Hartranft, General Hancock, Adjutant General Latta and Mr. George Bullock, rolled into the field and took a position near Washington's oak, escorted by the Governor's staff, mounted and in uniform. Following came the procession of military and civilians, headed by Generals Gregg and Reeder, with their staffs, who were escorted by the Philadelphia City Troop. The line and the people that followed hid the entire road for nearly a mile. In the lower portion of the field the grass had been mown so as to form a broad, clear way, enclosing a square of eight or ten acres. The line, which had broken, was again formed and began marching around the square, and when it was fully

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UPPER: Photograph from the Centennial of troops marching on the old parade ground from the encampment, with officers on horseback in the middle, positioned for review. From a stereoscopic slide by S.R. Fisher. *Courtesy of Robert Cohen collection.* LOWER: Contemporary view of the same parade grounds—"the Grand Parade"—with interpretive signage, June 2022. *Courtesy of John O. Senior*



REVIEW OF THE MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS BY MAJOR-GENERAL W. S. HANCOCK, U. S. A.
PENNSYLVANIA.—CELEBRATION OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EVACUATION OF VALLEY FORGE, JUNE 19TH.
FROM SKETCHES BY WALTER GOATER.—SEE PAGE 261.

"Review of the Military Organizations by Major General W.S. Hancock, U.S.A. Pennsylvania—Celebration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Evacuation of Valley Forge, June 19th From Sketches by Walter Goater"

stretched van touched rear.* They marched three times around in the following order: Washington Troop, West Chester, Captain Matlack, 46 men; Independent Boston Fusileers, Captain Snow, 78 men (organized in 1787 and the oldest company in Massachusetts); American Band of Boston; Norristown Odd Fellows, 100 men, and the Norristown Band; American Rifles, Wilmington, Delaware, Captain Wood, 43 men; Washington Grays, Philadelphia, Captain Elliott, 40 men, and band; Reading Rifles, Lieutenant Brobst, 40 men; Posts 76 and 16, G. A. R., of Reading, with a delegation of citizens from that place; West Chester Grays, Captain McFarland, 50 men, and band; Cooper Rifles, Media, Captain Russell, 35 men; Company C, Coatesville, Captain Brown, 37 men; Wayne Fencibles, Captain

*Note: In the section above, the phrase "van touched rear" refers to the vanguard, or front ranks, of the military formation approaching the rear-most part of the same formation.

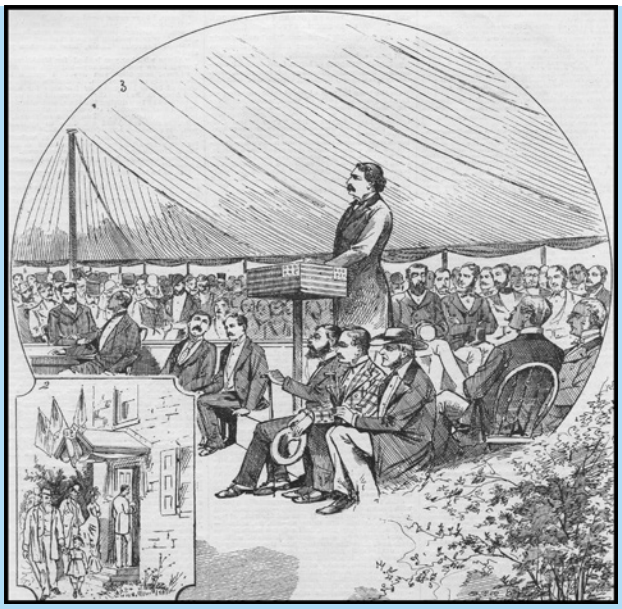
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Cornwell, 48 men; Companies A, K, F, I, H, G, D, E, C and B, First Regiment, Philadelphia; Company B, Third Regiment; Delaney Guards (colored), West Chester, Captain Hood, 30 men; Griffin Battery, Phoenixville, Captain Denithorn, 60 men carrying sabres; Montgomery Pioneers, 29 men; 78 soldiers' orphans (boys), from the Chester Springs School; Hiawatha and Ashland Councils, O. U. A. M., Philadelphia, and about one thousand employees of the Phoenix Iron Works, in their working clothes, classified according to the nature of their employment and carrying designs of buildings, and models of engines, machinery, etc., illustrating the entire business, from the mines up to the shipping department. The line was under the command of Generals Gregg and Reeder, with whom and their staffs were the City Troop. The great variety of shape and color in dress and the good marching rendered the review a magnificent spectacle.

THE CHIEF CEREMONIES

At one o'clock the tent near Fort Huntingdon was literally packed with people, and at least three more tentsfull were left outside to amuse themselves with fat-women shows, lottery wheels, "greatest snake exhibitions on earth," the pain-killer Demosthenes, the lung-tester man, the weigh-scales man, the man with guns and target and the enterprising patent medicine man, who advertized his wares through the antics of a gymnast on a rope stretched from a tree-top to a distant stump. All these and other centennial adjuncts and humbugs lined the roads, covered the hills and swarmed in the valleys. With the earthworks, the beer booths and the booths of all kinds of knick-knacks, they attracted larger crowds than could the proceedings within the limited bounds of the densely-thronged tent. There was not less than thirty-five thousand people on the grounds. The vendors were overworked, and the stock of most of them early exhausted, although nearly all the space of the woods above the tent that was not occupied by horses and carriages was taken up by family parties that had carried their lunch from home.

On the grand stand were seated the Governor, as presiding officer; the other distinguished officials and the orators and poets of the day. Weber's Fantasia, by the Ringgold Band, of Reading, opened the exercises. Then followed Dudley Buck's Centennial Hymn, by the chorus; prayer by the Rev. Charles Collins jr.; Bayard Taylor's hymn, "Waken, Voice of the Land's Devotion," by the chorus; a long poem by the Rev. J. G. Walker; M. Keller's "American Hymn," solo and chorus, and a historical paper by Colonel Theo. W. Bean. Although the tent was open at the sides the air was oppressive, and the people, who had all along been restless, began to go out in large numbers. When Colonel Bean finished the tent was little more than half full. Governor Hartranft, when introducing the historian, said that the latter, on account of the heat, would only read some extracts. As the Colonel kept at the extracts for over half an hour the article must have been rather exhaustive. To make matters worse, the inch pipe board forming the seats kept up a continual cracking, their supports having been so badly arranged as to give way to swaying, and thereby land spectators upon the grass.



THE ORATION

The chorus went on with "Hail, Valley Forge" (tune, America), composed by M. Robarts, and then followed by a pretty poem from the pen of Mrs. M. E. Thropp Cone. Next came the oration of the day, by Mr. Henry Armitt Brown, whose appearance was greeted with special applause. He spoke with his usual eloquence, although with a voice much impaired by a cold.

In the section that follows, the segments in italics are direct quotes from Henry Armitt Brown's much longer text, as found in the annotated version *Oration at Valley Forge, June 19, 1878: The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Departure of the Army of the Revolution from Winter Quarters at that Place* published in 1911 by Christopher Sower Company, Philadelphia, Pa. Other portions appear to have been paraphrased by the writer of the newspaper article.

Mr. Brown's oration was an eloquent presentation of the meaning and lessons of the anniversary. He sketched the condition of the affairs in the colonies at the opening of the winter of 1777 - 78, gave a graphic description of the British entry into Philadelphia, and then presented the contrast afforded by the winter camp at Valley Forge, whose position and occupants were minutely described. The trials which have made this place so famous arose chiefly from the incapacity of Congress. That body no longer contained the great men who had made it famous. Men of the second rank had come to the front. A smaller mind had begun to rule; petty rivalries has sprung up and sectional feeling had asserted itself. But if divided among themselves by petty jealousies they were united in a greater jealousy of Washington and the army. They cannot be wholly blamed for this. Taught by history no less than by their own experience of the dangers of standing armies in a free State, and waiting in modern history the single example which we have in Washington of a successful military chief retiring voluntary into private life, they judged the leader of their forces by themselves and the ordinary rules of human nature. It was in vain he called upon them to dismiss their doubts; in vain he asked for a single homogeneous army. Congress remained distrustful and refused the organization that Washington demanded. Instead of an army, he commanded only a mob.

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Without an organized quartermaster's department, the men could not be clothed or fed. They lay half naked on the frozen ground, and famine was among them. *And in the midst of this they persevered! Freezing, starving, dying, rather than desert their flag, they saw their loved ones suffer, but kept the faith. And the American yeoman of the Revolution remaining faithful through that winter is as splendid an example of devotion to duty as that the pitying ashes of Vesuvius have preserved through eighteen centuries in the figure of the Roman soldier standing at his post, unmoved amid all the horrors of Pompeii. "The Guard die, but never surrender" was the phrase invented for Cambronne. "My comrades freeze and starve, but they never forsake me," might be put into the mouth of Washington.*



But the darkest hour of night is just before the day. in the middle of February Washington described the dreadful situation of the army and "the miserable prospects before it" as "more alarming" than can be possibly be conceived, and as occasioning him more distress "than he had felt" since the commencement of the war. On the 23rd of February he whom we call Baron [von] Steuben rode into camp; on the 6th Franklin signed the Treaty of Alliance at Versailles. [von] Steuben it was, patient, careful, laborious and persevering, who transformed this untrained yeomanry into a disciplined and effective army; and Franklin, by his ability and tact, secured the recognition of the independence of the United States by France and her important aid. Meanwhile in March Greene had been appointed quartermaster, and under his skillful management relief and succor came. The Conciliatory Bills were received and rejected, and when news of the treaty came (in May) the army was drawn up for a service of thanksgiving. Then came at last the message that the enemy had evacuated Philadelphia and the army was at once set in motion to follow. *The scanty luggage was packed, the flag at headquarters taken down, the last brigade descended the river bank, the huts were empty, the breastworks deserted - the army was off for Monmouth and the hills of Valley Forge were left alone with their glory and their dead. The last foreign foe had left the soil of Pennsylvania forever.*

Such, then, is the history of this famous place. To my mind it has a glory all its own. The actions which have made it famous stand by themselves. It is not simply that they are heroic. Brave deeds have sanctified innumerable places in every land. The men of our Revolution were not more brave than their French allies, or their German cousins, or their English brethren. Courage belongs alike to all men. Nor were they the only men in history that suffered. Others have borne trial as bravely, endured with the same patience, died with as perfect a devotion. But it is not given to all men to die in the best of causes or win the greatest victories. It was the rare fortune of those who were assembled here one hundred years ago that, having in their keeping the most momentous things that were ever entrusted to a people, they were at once both faithful and victorious. The army that was encamped here was but a handful, but what host ever defended so much? And what spot of earth has had a farther reaching and happier influence on the human race than this?

Americans: A hundred years have passed away and that civilization and that liberty are still your heritage. But think not that such an inheritance can be kept safe without exertion. It is the burden of your happiness that with it privilege and duty go hand in hand together. You cannot shirk the present and enjoy in the future the blessings of the past. Yesterday begot to-day and to-day is the parent of to-morrow. The old time may be secure, but the new time is uncertain. The dead are safe; it is the privilege of the living to be in peril. A country is benefited by great actions only so long as her children are able to repeat them. The memory of this spot shall be an everlasting honor for our fathers, but we can make it an eternal shame for ourselves if we choose to do so. The glory of Lexington and Bunker Hill and Saratoga and Valley Forge belongs not to you and me, but we can make it our's if we will.

While Mr. Brown was speaking the "crack! crack!" of boards and consequent screams and confusion in the audience continued. One lady was rendered insensible by the fall of a board, which caught and severely crushed her. Before the orator finished seats enough to accommodate over two thousand had fallen. This annoyance to the speaker and his hearers was augmented by the playing of bands outside, which none of the arrangement committee seemed to think it worthwhile to stop. The orator having concluded and been heartily applauded, "The Heroes of Valley Forge," composed by the Rev. Sidney Dyer, was sung by the chorus and the audience - all standing - to the tune of Old Hundred, and was followed by a chorus of Handel's Hallelujah. The ceremonies ended with benediction by the Rev. Joseph H. Boyd.

The scene at the railroad station, with many thousands waiting for trains and all wanting to get away at once, reminded one of the evening of Pennsylvania Day at the Centennial. The Reading Company had put on for passenger traffic all their improvised Centennial cars and many freight cars, but the accommodations could not meet the wants of the home-going crowds. The last of them got home, however, and safely, but not until long after the close of the ceremonies at four o'clock. The Governor seemed pleased with what the county of his home had done, and at the close of the greatest of the extra centennials everybody appeared to think that Valley Forge, at least, would never see its like again.

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