

COMMANDING OFFICERS

The following list of the officers who commanded at Fort McIntosh was assembled by studying the records of military orders at both Fort McIntosh and Fort Pitt in which an officer either is ordered to Fort McIntosh, or signs an order at that post. It has been impossible to determine the actual dates of the change of command, but it must be remembered that this was a very small army that defended the entire northwest frontier. The various commanders of the Western Department and of the army during the Indian Wars had to shift men constantly to meet the emergencies of the moment, so periods of command were brief.

Brigadier General Lachlan McIntosh came to Georgia as a boy of nine with a contingent of Scotch Highlanders under his father, John Mohr McIntosh. They were brought to America by James Oglethorpe, the Georgia governor, to provide a buffer between the colony at Savannah and the Spanish in Florida. Lachlan became a successful planter, merchant and political leader. In 1776, he was commissioned by Congress to command the 1st Georgia Regiment, and became a Brigadier General. When a campaign against St. Augustine failed, McIntosh came under criticism. In retaliation, he called Button Gwinnett, president of Georgia's Supreme Council and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, a liar and a scoundrel. In the duel which resulted, both men were wounded, but Gwinnett died, McIntosh was then transferred to the Northern Army,

joining Washington at Valley Forge, where he was given command of the North Carolina Brigade. In 1778, he was named commander of the Western Department and built forts McIntosh and Laurens, the latter near present day Canton, Ohio. When it became evident that the British were to make the South the major theater of the war, he was again transferred and took part in the attack on Savannah. When his advice to get the Continentals out of Charleston was ignored, the Americans lost their entire Southern army, the heaviest loss of the war, and McIntosh himself was a prisoner for the duration. While he was in the west, Tories burned his plantation, barns, crops, and out-buildings, and stole his livestock, horses, and slaves. His losses were more than \$60,000, only a small part of which was repaid.

Col. John Gibson came to Western Pennsylvania as an Ensign in Forbes' expedition and remained to become a successful trader. He was captured by the Indians at the mouth of the Beaver, adopted by them, and released by the Bouquet expedition in 1764. Because of his familiarity with their language, he was trusted by the Indians. When the Revolution began he commanded the 5th Virginia and took part in the battles of Trenton, Princeton, Germantown, and Brandywine. In 1778, he was transferred to the 13th Virginia when that regiment returned to the Western Department, commanded at Fort Laurens when it was under siege in the winter of 1778-79, and for a brief period in 1781 replaced Brodhead in command at Fort Pitt. He finished the war under Van Steuben in the Virginia campaign. After the war he became a Pittsburgh leader, a judge of the court of common pleas, and one of the incorporators of the First

Presbyterian Church, the Western Theological Seminary, and the Pittsburgh Academy, now the University of Pittsburgh. His last public service was his appointment by Thomas Jefferson as Secretary of the Indiana Territory.

Lt. Col. Richard Campbell was commissioned a captain in the 8th Virginia in 1776, and promoted to Major in 1777. In 1778, he was named Lt. Col. of the 13th Virginia and joined McIntosh at Fort Pitt. He was the last commander at Fort Laurens in 1779, and in 1780, tired of the internal bickering in the Western Department, received a transfer to the 4th Virginia. He was wounded at Camden, and then killed while leading a charge at Eutaw Springs in the last major battle control of the Carolinas. His family was awarded 6,000 acres of land for his services.

Col. Daniel Brodhead, a successful surveyor in Eastern Pennsylvania when the Revolution broke out, organized a regiment of riflemen and succeeded in command of Thompson's Rifle Regiment after the battle of Long Island. Transferred to the 4th Pennsylvania he was assigned to lead the 8th in 1777, and commanded it under Wayne at Brandywine and Germantown. He replaced McIntosh as commander of the Western Department when McIntosh was reassigned to the Southern theater. Aside from the successful campaign to burn Indian towns along the upper Allegheny in the summer of 1779, his main concern was to keep sufficient supplies on hand to support his thin forces covering a wide frontier. He was successful in his early attempts to keep the Delawares neutral, but eventually they went over to the English and he was severe in his treatment

of prisoners. He was removed from command at Fort Pitt in 1781, because of his unpopularity with the citizens of Pittsburgh, and was transferred to the 1st Pennsylvania. After the war he became a powerful political figure in Eastern Pennsylvania, and Surveyor General of the Commonwealth.

Captain John Clark, a native of Lancaster, began his military career with the Pennsylvania Rifle Corps in 1775 as a lieutenant. He became captain, later, with the 13th Regiment in 1777, and transferred to the 8th Pennsylvania in 1778. He served two terms as commander at Fort Pitt from April to July of 1779, and then again in 1781. He reentered the service in the 1st Infantry in 1787, and was wounded in St. Clair's defeat. When Wayne organized the new army he was first named as a Lt. Colonel Commander of the 1st Sub Legion, and then placed in command of all the forts on the upper Ohio.

Captain Samuel Dawson was transferred from the 11th Pennsylvania to the 8th Pennsylvania when it was ordered to return to the frontier in the summer of 1778. He was given command of the artillery on the long march back across the mountains, and in the summer of 1779 replaced John Clark as commander of the 123-man garrison of Fort McIntosh. He died in service in September of that year and was buried in the church yard of the First Presbyterian Church in downtown Pittsburgh.

Little is known of Captains Simon Morgan, Robert Beale and Benjamin Biggs of the 13th Virginia. Morgan originally was commissioned in the 8th Virginia and transferred to the

13th; the others joined the 13th regiment when it was organized. When the 13th was ordered back to the East in 1781, Morgan and Biggs apparently were with it. Records show that Morgan was wounded while serving under General Nathaniel Greene at the battle of Eutaw Springs. All three officers were given grants of more than 5,000 acres after the war.

Major Richard Taylor had fought at Brandywine, Germantown, and Monmouth, as a lieutenant and later a captain in the 1st Virginia, before transferring to the 13th at Fort McIntosh in 1778. During his stay in the Western Department he commanded at both Fort Henry at Wheeling and Fort McIntosh. After the war he moved to near Louisville, Kentucky where he became a member of the Constitutional and other conventions of the state legislature, an area judge, and U.S. Collector of Customs. More famous in history was his son Zachary Taylor, a Mexican War Hero and the 12th President of the United States.

Captain Adamson Tannehill was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in Col. Hugh Stephenson's Maryland-Virginia Rifle Regiment in 1776, transferred as a 1st Lieutenant to Col. Moses Rawlings' Maryland Rifle Regiment in 1777, and promoted to captain in the same year. He commanded two companies of that decimated regiment at Fort Frederick when they were ordered to Fort Pitt in the spring of 1779. Apparently he liked what he saw of the city for his house on Water Street between Wood and Market appears on a map of Pittsburgh in 1795, and he is listed as a member of what

was known as the Market Street Junto in the politics of the day.

In 1784, officers of a new type arrived at Fort McIntosh. These were our first career officers, former officers of the Continental Line who liked soldiering. Many of them were due to spend their lives in the regular army. Establishment of the military academy at West Point was 18 years in the future, and so they learned their trade on the frontier against a foe much different than the veterans of the British army. For those who survived the loneliness, the two disastrous defeats of the early days, and the weeding out of the incompetent by General Anthony Wayne, twenty-five years of continuous service to the United States was not uncommon.

Captain Walter Finney, a 1st lieutenant of the Pennsylvania Musket Battalion, was captured at Long Island in 1776, exchanged, and promoted to captain in the 6th Pennsylvania. In 1784, he was commissioned a captain in the 1st American Regiment, arriving with the first company at Fort McIntosh. He temporarily commanded there until the fort was repaired, and Lt. Col. Harmar arrived. Two forts on the lower Ohio were named for him.

Lt. Col. Josiah Harmar was a Pennsylvanian who had been in all the major campaigns of the Revolution, from the invasion of Canada in 1775 to the reoccupation of Charleston, S.C., in 1782. Because of his political connections, Congress delayed naming him the first commander of the 1st American Regiment until his return from delivering the signed copy of the treaty of peace to the

commissioners in Paris in 1783. His otherwise solid military record was clouded when he was ordered to take a force largely made up of untrained and undisciplined militia to destroy Indian towns in northwestern Ohio in 1790. His army took heavy casualties, especially among the regulars who kept the retreat from being a rout.

Major John Doughty from New Jersey and a graduate of Kings College, (now Columbia), began his military career as a captain in the New Jersey Artillery Battalion in 1776, and was transferred to the 2nd Connecticut Artillery in 1777. He served as Aide-de-Camp to General Schuyler during the Saratoga campaign. When the war ended he was commanding the last company remaining in the Continental service, the 55 men of the 4th Continental Regiment of the Corps of Artillery. He was promoted to Major in 1775, and his arrival at Fort McIntosh that year moved the headquarters of the U.S. 1st Battalion of Artillery, the oldest in continuous service of the United States, to this post, where Pennsylvania already had sent Captain William Douglas with a company of artillery. In 1792, he was transferred to the 2nd Infantry, resigned, but reentered the service in 1798 as a Lt. Col. in the Corps of Artilleryists and Engineers. He resigned in 1800.

Major John P. Wyllys commanded at Fort McIntosh in 1786. The first Wyllys, George, arrived in Connecticut in 1634 as one of the original proprietors and later became governor of the state. John P. Wyllys' father was Secretary of Connecticut for 66 years. Wyllys graduated from Yale in 1773, was a Major of the 3rd Connecticut, and led the Light

Infantry at the battle of Greenspring in Virginia when Cornwallis made his last attempt to trap Lafayette. He was commissioned as Major of the Connecticut Company in the 1st American Regiment, and succeeded Major Doughty in command at Fort McIntosh in 1786. That year he executed three deserters without a court martial, for which he in turn was court martialled but acquitted. As a result of the incident, however, the rules of court martial were changed. In 1790, on the Harmar expedition, he led a detachment of regulars and militia against an Indian town, but when the militia fled under attack, the overpowered regulars lost half of their men, and Wyllys himself was killed.

Captain John F. Hamtramck's family came to Canada from Luxemborg in 1753. When the Revolution broke out many Canadians of French descent served in the American army, and Hamtramck joined one of these regiments at age 18. In 1776, he was captain of the 5th New York, and was discharged in 1783. He reentered the service as a captain in the 1st American Regiment, arrived at Fort McIntosh with a detachment of recruits from West Point in 1785, and succeeded Major Wyllys in command in 1786. That same year he was promoted to major when the 1st American Regiment became the 1st Regiment of Infantry. In 1789, he commanded the 1st United States Infantry, but did not participate in the Harinar and St. Clair defeats. He commanded the 1st Sub Legion and distinguished himself at Fallen Timbers, then stayed on as commander of the 1st Infantry. His first wife drowned at Fort Wayne. He then became our first commander at Detroit, where he married the sister of Sir Alexander MacKenzie, the famous Canadian

trader for whom the MacKenzie River, the longest in Canada, is named. He was promoted to Colonel in 1800 and died in service as Commander of the 1st Infantry in 1803. He is buried in Hamtramck, Michigan, which is named for him, and where the officers who served under him erected a monument over his grave.

Captain David Strong enlisted as a sergeant in the Connecticut State Regiment in 1776. He was taken prisoner that year and, after exchange, was commissioned in the 5th Connecticut in January 1777. He was promoted to captain in 1780, and transferred to the 2nd Connecticut in 1781. He reentered the service as a captain in the 1st American Regiment in July 1785, and was a major when the regiment became the 1st United States Infantry in 1789. He was Lt. Col., commander of the 2nd Infantry, and of the 2nd Sub Legion, and again of the 2nd Infantry in 1796. He died in service in 1801.

Captain William Ferguson entered the Continental Army as a private in Proctor's First Company of Pennsylvania Artillery in 1776, was commissioned in the 4th Continental Regiment Corps of Artillery in 1777. He was taken prisoner at Boundbrook, exchanged and promoted to captain in 1778. In 1785, he replaced Captain Thomas Douglas as commander of the artillery company furnished by Pennsylvania for the 1st American Regiment. It was one of the original companies of the U.S. Battalion of Artillery, authorized by Congress in October, 1786. He succeeded Major Doughty in command of the Battalion in 1791, and was later killed in St. Clair's defeat.

Carrying on the line of professionals was Captain Mahlon Ford, whose paternal grandfather was born in Massachusetts; in 1659, and whose grandmother came from England to Philadelphia. Born near Morristown, he was commissioned an Ensign in Col. Drayton's 3rd Regiment of the New Jersey Line in 1777, was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant the same year, and returned as a supernumerary in 1779. When the 1st Regiment was organized, he was an Ensign in Captain Lane's Company, promoted to 2nd Lieutenant in Mercer's Company in 1786 and the same year transferred as a 1st Lieutenant to the 1st Battalion of the United States Artillery. He was promoted to Captain in 1791, and wounded in St. Clair's defeat. After commanding the artillery company of the 1st Sub Legion, he was promoted to Major in the Corps of Engineers and Artilleryists in 1798. He retired from the army in 1802 returned to New Jersey and became a judge. For his services in the Revolution, he was granted 200 acres in Ohio.

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